

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

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

# The Point

April 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.

## Southern Hospitality

by Shannon L.

*Wash da car bayou self.* That was what the sign read as we drove from Baton Rouge toward New Orleans down highway 10.

First I'm going to backtrack a couple of days. It all started out when my friend John S. gave twenty dollars, put some food in the bin, and still felt as though he had not done nearly enough for all those suffering from the devastation down in the southeastern states. I overheard him talking to another fellow about his plans to join and support the hurricane relief operation, so I invited myself to come along for the ride. I had been unemployed for a couple of weeks because I quit my job and prayed for adventure, and I had heard from another fellowship member that there was good money to be made in carpentry doing recovery work. And besides, I could be of service.

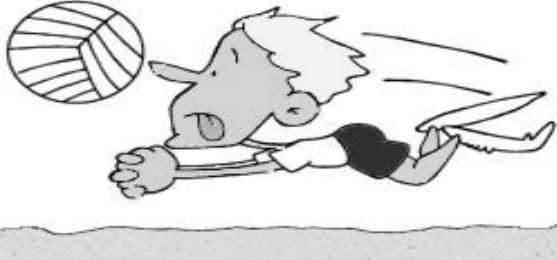
We pitched all the tools we could gather in the back of John's truck and hit the road, telling our friends "We're on a mission from God." Our home group pitched in three cases of Big Books so we wouldn't show up empty handed. When we arrived in Baton Rouge we found the Central Office stocked full to the ceiling with books donated from around the country. Joy, the Central Office manager there let us fill the remaining space in the truck with another twenty cases of books and some literature, coffee pot, etc...

When we finally arrived in New Orleans we found it completely deserted. It looked like a ghost town. In fact, it looked as though there was hardly a building in the whole city left untouched by either the hurricane Katrina or the flooding which followed close after. We found the Central Office there, and Kelly, the Office Manager said we could get to work cleaning out the building. We were anxious to stretch our legs and get some exercise. The Office had recently been relocated from its usual neighborhood, which was destroyed, to a new building which was still quarantined for health hazard. The whole interior of the building was ripped out up to the knee level, and there was a strong smell of mold in the air. Kelly was answering the phones and directing those in need from her own home.

After spending the day working, Kelly had pity on us and suggested we might find more comfortable lodgings at her sponsor's house. We arrived and were welcomed by real Southern Hospitality. We were washed and fed and given comfortable beds. It seemed we were in the only untouched house in the whole

(Continued on page 6)

# April 2006....

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	<b>3 FIRST MON</b> Archives Committee, Central Office, 6 pm  Spirit of SF Committee, Central Office, 7:30 pm	4	<b>5 FIRST WED</b> Intercounty Fellowship Board Orientation 6 pm Meeting 7 pm 1187 Franklin St., First Unitarian Church, SF	6	7	8
9	<b>10 SECOND MON</b> SF Public Information Committee Central Office, 7 pm	<b>11 SECOND TUE</b> 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	<b>12 SECOND WED</b> 12th Step Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm  Marin Bridging the Gap 1411 Lincoln Ave., San Rafael 6:45 pm	<b>13 SECOND THU</b> Website Committee Central Office, 6 pm	14	15
16	<b>17 THIRD MON</b> SF Teleservice Central Office, 6:30 pm  Marin General Service 9 Ross Valley Rd, San Rafael GSR Sharing: 7 pm District Meeting: 8 pm	<b>18 THIRD TUE</b> San Mateo General Service St. Andrews Church 15th & El Camino Real San Mateo, 7:30 pm	<b>19 THIRD WED</b> Literature Review Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm	20	21	<b>22 FOURTH SAT</b> General Service CNCA Meeting 320 N. McDowell Petaluma DCMCs: 10 am Business Meeting: 12:30 pm
<b>23 FOURTH SUN</b> Living Sober Convention Committee 1668 Bush, SF 5:30  <b>30</b>	24	<b>25 FOURTH TUE</b> Special Needs Committee, 2:00 pm; Special Events Committee Central Office, 7:30 pm  Marin Teleservice 1360 Lincoln Ave San Rafael Alano Club 7:30 pm	26	<b>27 FOURTH THU</b> Marin PI Committee 1360 Lincoln Ave, San Rafael – Alano Club 7:30 pm <b>LAST THU</b> SF H&I Old First Church, 1751 Sacramento St. SF Orientation: 7:15 pm	28	29

## From the Editor...

We A.A.'s are the original drama queens. We don't get headaches, we get brain tumors. Every little pothole in the road of life is a crisis, either real or imaginary. In the 12 & 12 the writer talks about the concern for A.A.'s going off to war in the 1940's. It turned out that the steps got them through the misery, hardship and danger of war without drinking, sometimes even better than the A.A.'s who stayed home. How well do A.A.'s handle the crises and catastrophes of our modern world? In this issue, we read how some local A.A.'s packed up and headed to Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina. They found some flooded Central Offices and soggy literature and they pitched in and helped out. Another A.A. writes about surviving catastrophe – when everything in life that could go wrong, does. Another A.A. writes about begging God for a break, and getting it, but not quite the way he expected. Another writer recounts how the life and death of a sober woman inspires all her friends. And then there's the A.A. who is getting tired of some of the whining at meetings. The service article this month is about surviving being a delegate, the featured literature is the pamphlet on getting and staying sober in prison – "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell," and the A.A. acronym? F.E.A.R., of course—in all its manifestations. We hope you enjoy this month's issue of *The Point* as much as we enjoyed putting it together for you. And speaking of A.A.'s in crisis, it looks as if Alky is having a meltdown, all alone with nobody writing in. Shall *The Point* discontinue this column, after three-plus years? Call, write or e-mail Central Office and let us know!

In service,

The Point Committee

## Joke of the Month

**Newcomer: "My conscience finally brought me to the Program."**

**Old-timer: "How so?"**

**Newcomer: " I kept seeing this eyeball staring at me from the bottom of the glass! I'm sure it was my conscience."**

**Old-timer: "Probably an olive. But never mind--- whatever works!"**



Reprinted from: *God Grant me the Laughter* by Ed F.

## 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 Committee:

Greg W., Kathleen C., Li L., Lynne H., Maury P., Mike L., Morgan L., Victor V. 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](mailto:thepoint@aasf.org) or call 415.674.1821.



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# MEETING CHANGES

## New Meetings:

Sat 12:00 pm Hayes Valley THE GREAT FACT, S.F. Alano Club, 1748 Market St. (SS)

## Meeting Changes:

Mon 9:00 am	Castro	(THE SPAWN OF) STRAITJACKET, 3400 16th St., enter on Church St. (was 601 Dolores)
Mon 12:15 pm	Mission	HIGH NOON MONDAY, 1661 15th St./ Julian Ave. (was 601 Dolores)
Mon 6:00 pm	Castro	EUREKA VALLEY TOPIC, 100 Collingwood St./ 18th St. (was 100 Diamond St.)
Mon 7:15 pm	Hayes Valley	NEW HOPE BIG BOOK, S.F. Alano Club, 1748 Market St. (was 601 Dolores & 6:30pm)
Tue 12:15 pm	Mission	HIGH NOON TUESDAY, 1661 15th St./ Julian Ave. (was 601 Dolores)
Tue 6:00 pm	Hayes Valley	EASY DOES IT, S.F. Alano Club, 1748 Market St. (was 601 Dolores)
Wed 12:15 pm	Mission	HIGH NOON WEDNESDAY, 1661 15th St./ Julian Ave. (was 601 Dolores)
Thu 9:00 am	Castro	STRAITJACKET, 3400 16th St., enter on Church St. (was 601 Dolores)
Thu 12:15 pm	Mission	HIGH NOON THURSDAY, 1661 15th St./ Julian Ave. (was 601 Dolores)
Fri 12:15 pm	Mission	HIGH NOON FRIDAY, 1661 15th St./ Julian Ave. (was 601 Dolores)
Fri 6:00 pm	Castro	JUST US DRUNKS, S.F. Alano Club, 1748 Market St. (7:00 pm)
Tue 6:00 pm	Hayes Valley	LET IT BE NOW, S.F. Alano Club, 1748 Market St. (was 601 Dolores)
Tue 8:00pm	Crocker Amazon	STREETWISE STEP STUDY, 981 Geneva Ave./ Paris (was 951 Geneva/ Mission)
Sat 11:00 am	Castro	KEEP COMING BACK, 100 Collingwood St./ 18th St. (was 100 Diamond St.)
Sat 12:15 pm	Mission	HIGH NOON SATURDAY, 1661 15th St./ Julian Ave. (was 601 Dolores)
Sat 8:00 pm	Corte Madera	SATURDAY NIGHT, Hillside Church, 5461 Paradise Dr. (was 8:30 pm)

## No Longer Meeting:

Thu 6:30 pm Excelsior THE THREE LEGACIES, 9 Persia Ave./ Mission St.

## Recently Registered Trusted Servants February 2006

Below are the meetings whose Trusted Servants registered with Central Office during February 2006—nineteen in San Francisco and four in Marin. Thank you for registering!

### San Francisco

Beach Meeting/ Meditation Sat. 9:30am; Easy Does It Tue. 6pm; End of Isolation Thu. 6pm; Fireside Chat Sat. 9pm; High Noon Tuesday Tue. 12:15pm; Joys of Recovery Tue. 8pm; Rose Garden Big Book Thu. 12:05pm; Sober & Centered Fri. 7pm; Sober at State Mon. 12:10pm; Sunday Night Castro Speaker Discussion Sun. 8pm; Sunset 9'ers Wed. 9am; Sunset 9'ers Fri. 9am; Sunset 9'ers Sun. 8am; The Parent Trap Mon 12:30pm; Tuesday's Daily Reflections Tue. 7am; Thursday Night Women's Thu. 6:30pm; We Care Tues. 12pm; West Portal Wed. 8:30pm; Y.A.H.O.O. Step Sat. 11am

### Marin

Creekside New Growth Sun. 7pm; Downtown Mill Valley Fri. 8:30pm; Nativity Monday Night Big Book Mon. 8pm; Saturday Serenity Sat. 8pm

## CONTRIBUTIONS

to Central Office were made through March 15, 2006 honoring the following members:

### ONGOING MEMORIALS

Dina R.,  
John D. M.,  
Lita G.,  
Vern S.,  
and  
Donald W.

### ANNIVERSARIES 🎵

Ardis J. 14 years  
Lyle W. 31 years  
Marin Fellowship: Mary F. 15 years

## Coming Up!

### BRISBANE BREAKFAST BUNCH

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

DATE	SPEAKER	FROM
04/02	Carlos	Mission Fellowship
04/09	Donna H.	Embarcadero Group
04/16	Bob W.	Mon. Men's Study
04/23	Kris W.	Ashby Fri., Berkeley
04/30	Lauren	Embarcadero Group

### TUESDAY DOWNTOWN

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

DATE	SPEAKER	LOS	HOME GROUP
04/04	Rudy S.	22 years	Friday All Groups
04/11	Damon B.	10 years	Friendly Circle
4/18	Coy D.	23 years	Friendly Circle
04/25	Bill K.	21 years	El Sobriety, Oakland

### FRIDAY ALL GROUPS

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

DATE	HOST GROUP	SPEAKER	FROM	DATE	HOST GROUP	SPEAKER	FROM
04/07	TBA	Mike J.	Sutter St. Beginners	04/14	No Meeting—Church event		
04/21	Work In Progress	Lucy O.	Came to Believe	04/28	Weekend Worker	Mario P.	Serenity House

## "SPRING FORWARD"

with The Spirit of San Francisco

### AA Meeting & Social Sunday - April 2

Speaker Meeting 3 - 4PM

Taco Feed Dinner 4:30 - 6PM

Comedy Competition 6:30 - 9PM

### CITY FOREST LODGE

254 Laguna Honda Blvd

(at Plaza St.)

San Francisco

\$15 dinner & show

Sign up to Compete (415) 752-9930



## 12th-Step Workshop

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

Saturday, May 6, 2006

10—11 a.m.

Central Office

1821 Sacramento St., San Francisco

To help educate and inform the Fellowship, members of Alcoholics Anonymous will share their Twelfth Step work experience. If you are interested in serving in this capacity, please join us for the workshop.

Both San Francisco and Marin Counties are seeking men and women willing to share their experience, strength and hope through 12-step work.

# Shock in Recovery

by Russ R.

At this time a year ago, I had just moved to Savannah, Georgia, where I was going to marry a woman I had been dating for two years, mostly long distance. I had been single for almost seventeen years, since a very bad marriage in early sobriety had self-destructed under the weight of untreated character defects. So I was excited, feeling as if the efforts of working this program for twenty-one years were paying off. We had a lovely wedding in late February, and spent our honeymoon on an island just off the coast of Georgia. It was absolutely perfect.

Two months later, I was cooking dinner, and my wife was sharing the details of her work day, when her cell phone rang. When she said, "Yes, I'm sitting down," and her face twisted into a look of despair, I turned off the burner and sat down next to her. Moments later, she was screaming. The call came from her ex-husband. Their nineteen-year-old daughter had been killed instantly in a motorcycle accident. She was on her way to surprise us, to introduce us to her new boyfriend.

When you've been sober for over twenty years, you like to think that you're prepared for anything. You like to think that there are few things that will rock your foundation. You like to think that, no matter what happens in your life, you will handle the situation with grace and dignity, because that is what you have worked your ass off to achieve since you've been sober.

Real life is so much more complicated than I ever expected. The grief that overcame our lives overnight was a beast. It devoured every bit of joy from every single

day. Our wedded bliss was immediately replaced with a hopeless, impotent rage. In the two years we'd been dating, we had only been in the same place for about four months, so our fragile little union wasn't strong enough to bear the weight of this overpowering anger. We fought every day. My desperation to find a way to relieve my wife of this horrible grief almost drove me insane. Despite going to meetings every day, I felt more powerless than I ever have. I finally decided, after much soul searching, that I was doing more harm than good. That my wife's chances of recovering from this tragedy would be better if she was surrounded by people whom she'd known all her life. There is no way of knowing whether this was true. But I left. My wife agreed that I should leave at the time, but she later told me that she was in too much shock to make that kind of decision. She wishes I had stayed. I'm not sure I'll ever know if it was the right thing to do. But I was afraid of what would happen if I stayed. We were tearing each other apart.

The miracle of this whole experience is that I never once thought of taking a drink. I had immersed myself in the program in Savannah, and the people there were incredible. And of course, when I returned to San Francisco, I realized that I had so many friends here... more than I ever knew. Sobriety does not guarantee anything. It doesn't mean that my life will be smooth and happy all the time. But I now know more than ever that Alcoholics Anonymous can help me get through anything. And perhaps best of all, it allows me to live with my decisions, and my mistakes. For that, I am eternally grateful. ↑

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## Southern Hospitality *(Continued from page 1)*

city. These people were warm and friendly and told us about how distressing it had been riding out the disasters. What a nightmare it sounded like, however here were people who had just been through hell, and they still had the consideration to open up their homes to travelers from California. Such absolute selflessness is something which I've found often in AA.

We went to these kind peoples' home group and met a couple in real need of assistance. They were elderly folks who had come back to the city to go through all their personal belongings, to try and salvage what they could. Like most, their home was devastated, but they handled themselves with such grace and dignity that it made me proud to know the credit goes to A.A. It reminded me to practice these principles, which pay such large dividends,

when the going gets rough.

The things we found at this house almost made me cry. The man was an employee of the General Service Office in New York for 10 years and his house was an archives department all in its own. Everything was destroyed by water damage. I personally threw away the original manuscript for the *Daily Reflections* book. Just holding it in my hands made me realize I was part of something much bigger.

What I took home from my trip was not financial gain, but memories of fine people handling themselves with refinement when all around there was chaos. I got paid a thousand times better than I could have imagined, and that's been my experience every time when I show up with the intent of "just being of service". God gave me adventure all right, and when I got home I felt real lucky when regular employment came my way. ↑

## Dear Alky

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

Dear Readers,

I feel like Brian Wilson—*Alone in My Room*. Or maybe like a doting mother—“You don’t write, you don’t call.”

I can’t remember when I got my last letter from you. I guess I could make some up, but I hate doing that... I could call my sponsor, but I’ve done that a lot lately.

*Is everyone recovered?*

This may be like the situation Bill talks about in *Alcoholics Anonymous*; the one in “Working with Others” where he reminds us that if we keep chasing a prospect who



*Is everyone recovered?*

doesn’t want what we have, then we risk not being there for the one who does.

So maybe it’s time for Alky to move on to some other form of service, or for *The Point* to institute a new column. Do we need a section for letters from A.A.’s sharing their experience, strength and hope—like Box 1980 in The A.A. Grapevine?

What do you say, readers? Am I about to be laid off? Are you handing me my pink slip?

Waiting with baited breath...

Alky

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If you have a question for Alky, please write to us at [thepoint@aasf.org](mailto:thepoint@aasf.org). We welcome our readers’ participation!

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## “Please God, Not Now!”

by Christopher G.

I had one of my first really powerful Spiritual Awakenings as I uttered the words “Please God, not now!” It was my 108<sup>th</sup> day of sobriety and I was being loaded onto the stretcher of an ambulance. The EMT’s were barking out instructions to try to save my life. At that moment, as the stretcher whirled around, I realized I was praying to God to spare my life. I was actually fighting for my life for the first time in years!

Here I was, 12 days out of a 90 day treatment program, and having a massive heart attack! I had tried so many times prior to sobriety to *end* my life and I had even prayed in those final months of drinking and using for a heart attack to relieve me from my misery. But the gifts of sobriety had already taken hold in my life and I now wanted to live.

It occurred to me that I could have stood there on that street corner and done nothing and I would have died, checking out naturally. But the power of the program had now been instilled deeply in me and my instincts for life took over. This awakening was so powerful and life affirming that I surged with joy throughout my body. But at that exact moment a horrendous surge of pain also struck my body. It was the first wave of my massive heart attack! The mix of my Higher Power coming into my life collided against the force of a heart attack bolting through

my veins, leaving me phenomenally overwhelmed. And thus my journey began.

That event was followed by an open heart triple bypass surgery. Today, four years, two heart attacks, two open heart and six Cardiac Catheterization surgeries later, I write to you in sobriety. I have been diagnosed with both Advanced Coronary Artery Disease due to long term HIV disease (drinking, drugging and smoking for 28 years didn’t help!), and Chronic Vascular Migraines.

By the grace of God I have been able to stay sober throughout all of my illnesses and chronic pain. People ask me all time, “How do you do it?” My answer is simple. I have two choices today: I can either live in fear or I can live in faith. I choose faith. Everyday I ask my Higher Power for guidance, strength and the ability to walk through the pain sober. I remain in service with both meeting commitments and sponsees. I have relied on the power of A.A. to bring meetings and food to me when I couldn’t get out. I have let the hand of A.A. help me as I help others. I also follow my doctor’s instructions exactly.

What I do know is that life is going to show up one way or another for all of us. But I can also count on A.A. to show up as well, if I let it in. ↑

## 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

Victor V.—415.726-0518

#### ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

Lynnore G. lynnore1@aol.com

#### LITERATURE COMMITTEE

Steve N. snolan12000@yahoo.com

#### ORIENTATION COMMITTEE

Tim M. gryffindor-house@earthlink.net

#### OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Chair Needed

#### THE POINT

Chair Needed

#### SPECIAL EVENTS

Fran K. 415.424.0626

#### SPECIAL NEEDS COMMITTEE

Pene P. 415.200-6261

#### TRUSTED SERVANTS WORKSHOP COMMITTEE

Monika H. monihar2002@yahoo.com

#### WEBSITE COMMITTEE

Chair Needed

#### SF TELESERVICE COMMITTEE

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

#### SF PI/CPC COMMITTEE

Jill H. 415.647-3553.

## Service Bulletin

# Life After Delegate

by Doug G.

At seven years sober, I fell in love with A.A. all over again. I was introduced to General Service work back in 1994 because I was nosy. I had heard of round-ups, conferences, retreats and conventions, but I saw a flyer at the Alano Club that said there would be an “Area 06 Assembly” in San Mateo. I just *had* to go check it out. Little did I know that it would be the beginning of an exquisite ten year journey of new A.A. service. Shortly afterwards, I was elected the General Service Rep for “Signs of Sobriety,” a deaf group in San Jose. As my amazement at how A.A. functioned grew, I continued to be available and elected to jobs of more and more responsibility, culminating by the immense privilege of being elected Delegate to the General Service Conference in New York from California Northern Costal Area 06.

From page S44 of the A.A. Service Manual, it describes delegate as: “*The delegate has a demanding job, not only because a large amount of time and work are involved, but because it is the delegate’s responsibility to serve the US/Canada Conference as a whole. As voting members of the Conference, delegates bring to its deliberations the experiences and viewpoints of their own areas. Yet they are not representatives of their areas in the usual political sense; after hearing all points of view and becoming fully informed during Conference discussion, they vote in the best interests of A.A. as a whole.*”

When I read through the qualifications and duties of a delegate, my head told me there was no way I was qualified and I could not be elected. However, good sponsors will tell you, “God doesn’t call the qualified, He qualifies the called.” And what a call it was!!

The conference process is true democracy in action. The A.A. groups do run A.A.. How? Through hearing the group’s *informed* conscience on matters affecting A.A., we jointly made what we thought were the best decisions for A.A. as a whole. No issue was considered too inconsequential. We approved new literature, edited others, including deciding to move forward on a new edition of *Alcohólicos Anónimos*. We are always looking for better ways to carry our life-saving message of recovery to suffering alcoholics.

The benefits from having been in service have been immense. I learned how to let go of my own plans and ideas and listen to both sides of an issue and how to organize and juggle my time. I learned it is possible to be a leader and a servant at the same time. I was asked if there were any “surviving disaster” stories during my term. There really weren’t. Sure, we all have some uncomfortable moments, like groups not following traditions, anonymity breaks, threats to our unity, and wishing more groups and members would take an interest in the bigger picture of A.A. I discovered that we need have no fear, and that the groups are on the front lines for helping drunks, and are therefore of the highest importance. Without a healthy group, where would we go? I learned that A.A. is self-correcting. God’s will, as expressed through the informed group conscience, will always rise above the clamor that, in the moment, may seem like disaster or impending calamity. The biggest thing I learned is that there are really *no* big deals, as long as I remember who’s in charge...and thank God, it’s not me! 📌



# Big Book Study: Chapter Three—More About Alcoholism

by Morgan L.

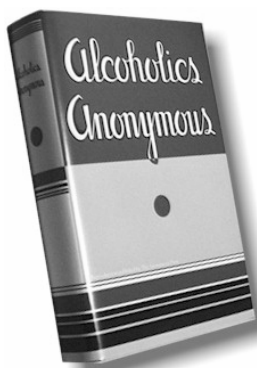
If you want to delve into characteristics common to suffering alcoholics, read Chapter Three in *Alcoholics Anonymous, More About Alcoholism*. This Chapter describes the experiences of several alcoholics before and after they got into the rooms and the insanity preceding the first drink. As a newcomer, I was able to relate to the stories and identify the workings of the disease in my own life. And finally I began to see the solution.

The disease of Alcoholism is unlike other diseases because no definitive test exists that can assess whether an individual is an alcoholic. Moreover, the only person qualified to diagnose a potential alcoholic is the potential alcoholic. For these reasons, Chapter Three, *More About Alcoholism*, helps potential alcoholics and alcoholics new to the fellowship better understand the nature of this disease.

When I first came into Alcoholics Anonymous, I wondered how a 23-year old girl could possibly be an alcoholic. I knew my Dad was an alcoholic, and I had been warned that alcoholism may be genetic, but I could not, or did not, want to believe that a girl so young could suffer from this disease. Nonetheless, I was suffering.

I was a “good girl” in high school, but my drinking rapidly became unmanageable when I moved away to college. I had many symptoms of a “potential alcoholic” described in Chapter Three: drinking and using without consideration of the consequences or dangers, drinking and using when I swore I wouldn’t, using any excuse to get loaded, and a seemingly endless supply of demoralizing outcomes. But because I was in college and everyone was getting drunk, I wasn’t too worried. It seemed like everyone was partying hard.

I moved home to my parent’s house after I graduated college. During this period, I first noticed my inability to stay sober. I was studying for the GRE and took a very difficult and demanding job. I knew I needed to cut down on the drugs and alcohol; despite the tasks ahead of me that demanded a clear head, I could not stop and realized that my drinking wasn’t, “just a phase.”




*Simply put, there will come a time when the only thing that comes between you and a drink, is your higher power..*

Towards the end of my drinking, I would give myself a “talking-to” and vow not to get too drunk at parties. Sometimes I would vow not to drink at all. But the moment I walked into the party, I instinctively made my way to the alcohol. It was impossible to have just one drink. I always blacked out and never woke up where I started. At the end, every night of drinking led to incomprehensible demoralization. But I still could not stop.

Admitting defeat, I stumbled into the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous. One of the most important lessons I learned from this program is in Chapter Three: *I have no defense against the first drink*. Chapter Three describes the mental blank spots that I experienced right before I picked up. No matter how incomprehensible or demoralizing my last drunk was, I always drew a mental blank about how awful things became when I was drunk and high. I would always pick up again.

I have stayed sober for over a year by taking suggestions from other alcoholics, completing the steps, and turning my will and my life over to the care of God on a daily basis. My nature is to run the show and rule my life with an iron will. My sponsor told me that I needed to turn my will over to a power greater than myself. Believing and acting as if I don’t need to control everything in my life is an act of faith.

Faith, spirituality and Alcoholics Anonymous are inextricably linked. When we have faith in a power greater than ourselves we are practicing spirituality. We bring about a deepened spiritual awakening by working the Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Chapter Three explains that the reason we need to cultivate spirituality is that, “The alcoholic at certain times has no effective mental defense against the first drink. Except in a few rare cases, neither he nor any other human being can provide such a defense. His defense must come from a higher power.”

Simply put, there will come a time when the only thing that comes between you and a drink, is your higher power. This is perhaps the most important part of Chapter Three. We cannot rely on people, places, or things to keep us sober. More importantly, we cannot rely on ourselves. Rather, we must cultivate faith in a higher power, and turn loose of our iron grip. 



## Faithful Fivers! *Thanks for Your Support*

Faithful Fivers are A.A. members who graciously pledge to contribute at least Five Dollars each month toward the support of Central Office in its efforts to carry the A.A. message to alcoholics who still suffer in the San Francisco and Marin area. As a Faithful Fiver, your personal contribution can and will make our vital services possible. We'd like to thank the following members for joining:

Ami Joy Y.	Michael R.
Barbara M.	Nancie G.
Brian H.	Pat P.
Caroline A.	Paul W.
Carolyn S.	Peg L.
David B.	Pene P.
David H.	Peter F.
David P.	Randall S.
Douglas C.	Rebekah D.
Elizabeth S.	Rich G.
Giles H.	Robert K.
Greg W.	Sheila H.
Herman B.	Stephen N.
Jane K.	Steve A.
Janet B.	Steven S.
Jim H.	Tim M.
Lauren H.	Tom M.
Lisa M.	Tony J.
Matt E.	Dennis & Lucy O.



## She Completed the Program *by Jill M.*

A multitude of things changed in my life during 2001 and 2002. I moved from my beloved San Francisco to the suburbs, got married, left a job of eleven years, started a business, and bought a home. All together, the changes were overwhelming. I was living in a new community without a sponsor. Seeing my struggle, a very kind fellow alcoholic, Dale, suggested I speak with her sponsor Lita. I called Lita and we talked.

After a long and helpful conversation, Lita recommended that she come to my regular Sunday meeting and we go to coffee afterward. She suggested that perhaps she start attending my meeting weekly and we make a commitment to have breakfast afterward to discuss the Steps. This got my attention. I never had a sponsor who showed such an effort to accommodate my schedule. I sensed right away that Lita was a very special person.

Over the next few months Lita and I met weekly. We both came to love and appreciate our regular get-togethers. And with her help, I was getting better. Lita insisted that I use the Steps to solve the issues in my life. She also suggested I started attending Al-Anon. Both suggestions helped me immensely. Over the next couple of years we further deepened our relationship. In 2004 my husband John and I started a Step meeting. Lita supported that meeting and later became the co-secretary.

They say, "When the student is ready, the teacher appears." As I moved toward my 20<sup>th</sup> year in sobriety, Lita was the perfect teacher. Her wisdom, candor and insight helped me navigate unfamiliar situations. By example she showed me the importance of kindness, taking the high road, and setting boundaries. She showed me that in some instances tough love is the hardest to practice and the most beneficial for everyone. Lita was the perfect blend of tough and tender. She spoke her mind, never mincing words, but always finding the right combination of truth and love.

In late 2004 Lita's knee started bothering her. She was having difficulty climbing the stairs of our Sunday meeting and gradually stopped coming. We talked on the phone often. I was worried as were others who loved her. After months of chronic pain she went to the doctor to have tests run. In early 2005 Lita was diagnosed with cancer. And the cancer was spreading.

Lita was admitted to the hospital. My husband John and I visited her. She was highly medicated and it was difficult to see her in such a state of confusion. On the way home from the hospital John said, "We need to bring her meetings." We decided we wanted to be with her all the way to the end. She had given us so much. This was our chance to return the love, through our actions.

I called several people in our Tuesday Step group to ask if they would come to the hospital meeting. Everyone I called said yes. And so began

*(Continued on page 14)*

## Literature Review

*It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell*


by Steve N.



“Now Mr. N., do you have any injuries or physical disabilities that would keep you from walking a straight line?” The tall police officer asked. Of course I do, I thought, my mind racing to find the right lie to tell the patient officer. I blurted one out a few seconds later, “Yes, I hurt my right leg wrestling in high school. I might fall towards my right.” Which I did. But it had nothing to do with a sports injury from more than five years before. I was legally intoxicated. Driving Under the Influence just eleven days after my twenty-first birthday. I thought I was putting one over on the local police officer. I raced through all his field sobriety tests; like I had seen my friends do a hundred times before. The last test was to put my hands palm down on my head and close my eyes, and then.....click and that sharp cold feeling of cuffs being tightened around my wrists.

Although I was only in the local holding cell for six hours, I was able to reflect on a new dimension of consequences caused by my drinking.

*It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell* is a collection of short stories and suggestions from those who have been in jails

and institutions because of their drinking. This is A.A. conference-approved literature updated in 2000 and is thirty-one pages long. The narrative is short and bolded with highlights of important points like, We Took A Good Honest Look at Our Drinking, We Decided to Learn About Drinking From Experts – The Drunks, We Tried to Use ‘The 24 – Hour Plan.’ Suggestions include how to learn about A.A. from both the members and the literature, when to spend less time with old boozing buddies and what to do when the teasing starts. When the time comes for release back into society, the pamphlet emphasizes the twenty-four hours before release and having a full stomach on your release day. “The idea of a drink is not so good after a piece of cake or a chocolate shake” (P.25). The last few pages discuss what A.A. does not do. Your expectations should be about meeting other people just like yourself who have an honest desire to stop drinking. Alcoholics Anonymous offers hope to both those in jail and those newly-released that they can stay sober one day at a time, provided they take a few simple suggestions. The pamphlet *It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell* is a welcome introduction to some of those suggestions. 

## NEW ITEMS FROM AA GRAPEVINE!

*I Am Responsible: The Hand of AA*

A special collection of 37 stories on the theme of the responsibility of carrying the AA message \$9.55

*The Best of Bill* -Large Print Edition

A collection of articles written by Bill W. offering his thoughts on faith, fear, honesty, humility, love, and anonymity \$5.95

Also available in these formats:

*The Best of Bill* (Pocket Size-Gift Edition) \$8.35

*The Best of Bill* (Pocket Size-Soft Cover) \$5.95

*The Hone Group: Heartbeat of AA*

With eight new stories from recent issues of the AA Grapevine! \$5.95

## AA Grapevine CD's!

All CD's are \$12 each!

*Partners on the Journey: Sponsorship Stories*

*Pathways to Spirituality: Varieties of Spiritual Experience*

*Not For Newcomers Only: Basic Principles to Deal with Everyday Problems*

*Classic Grapevine Volume 1: Timeless Articles from the pages of The Grapevine*

*Classic Grapevine Volume 2: Timeless Articles from the pages of The Grapevine*

*Classic Grapevine Volume 3: Timeless Articles from the pages of The Grapevine*

NOW AVAILABLE IN THE CENTRAL OFFICE BOOKSTORE



# AA Group Contributions - January 2006

Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous - San Francisco and Marin Counties

<u>Name</u>	<u>Jan. 2006</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Jan. 2006</u>
<b>Fellowship</b>		High Noon Friday 1215pm	181.57
Gay Newcomers Group	13.57	High Noon Tuesday 1215pm	79.83
IFB	75.00	High Noon Wednesday 1215pm	52.31
Unidentified Group	253.52	How It Works Sat 2pm	55.39
Unidentified Group	<u>127.20</u>	Keep It Simple Sat 830pm	93.32
<b>Total Fellowship</b>	<b>\$ 469.29</b>	Lush Lounge Sa 2pm	120.00
		Meeting Place Noon F 12pm	50.40
<b>Marin Group Contributions</b>		Mission Fellowship	259.73
A Vision For You (SF) Su 730pm	40.00	Monday Beginners M 8pm	300.00
Beginners & Closed Tu 7pm & 830pm	266.00	New Life W 7pm	128.25
Beginners Tu 7pm	156.00	Newcomers Group Tu 7pm	214.50
Beginners W 7pm	110.00	One Liners Th 830pm	667.86
Closed Women Step Study Tu 330pm	112.50	Pax West M 12pm	441.68
Intimate Feelings Sa 10am	95.60	Pax West Th 12pm	143.89
Island Group Th 8pm	161.50	Pax West Th 12pm	40.15
Keepin' It Real Th 6pm	60.00	Rebound W 830pm	85.00
Monday Night Stag (Tiburon) 8pm	307.78	Rule 62 W 10pm	279.00
On Awakening 7D 530am	210.00	Saturday Easy Does It Sa 12pm	351.29
Rise N Shine Sun 10am	67.50	Saturday Night Regroup Sat 730pm	184.73
Saturday Serenity Sa 8pm	65.50	Serenity House	200.00
Six O'Clock Sunset Th 6pm	97.61	SFPOA Th 7pm	51.00
Spiritual Testost. Sun Men's Stag Su 830a	250.00	Sisters Circle Su 6pm	107.46
Sunday Friendship Sun 7pm	120.00	Sober & Centered F 7pm	120.95
Terra Linda Group Th 830pm	100.00	Sober Across the Board M-Sa 830am	10.00
The Barnyard Group Sa 4pm	240.54	Sometimes Slowly Sa 11am	36.01
Tiburon Haven Sun 12pm	136.00	Step Talk Su 830am	30.25
Women's Big Book Tu 1030am	55.87	Step Talk Su 830am	264.00
Women on Monday M 7pm	<u>150.27</u>	Straight Jackets Th 9am	37.47
<b>Total Marin Group Contributions</b>	<b>\$ 2,802.67</b>	Sunset 11'ers Su	102.85
		Sunset 11'ers W	20.00
<b>SF Group Contributions</b>		Sunset 9'ers F	35.68
830am Smokeless Th	64.43	Sunset 9'ers Sa	131.65
Afro American Beginners Sat 8pm	28.35	Sunset 9'ers Tu	70.68
All Together Now Th 8pm	101.96	Sunset 9'ers W	96.59
Beginner Big Book Step Th 630pm	25.00	Sunset Speaker Step Sun 730pm	80.00
Castro Discussion (Show Of Shows) W 8pm	111.38	Ten Years After Su 6pm	410.56
Chips Ahoy Tu 12pm	33.00	Too Early Sat 8am	117.00
Cocanuts Su 9am	79.00	Waterfront Sun 8pm	132.00
Cow Hollow Men's Group	124.50	We Care Tu 12pm	124.35
Each Day a New Beginning F 7am	528.00	Wednesday Women's Big Book W 615pm	60.00
Each Day A New Beginning Su 8am	234.62	West Portal W 915pm	103.21
Each Day a New Beginning Tu 7am	220.30	Women's 10 Years Plus Th 615pm	74.09
Easy Does It Tu 6pm	70.00	Women's Kitchen Table Group Tu 630pm	82.75
Fireside Chat Tu 8pm	81.28	YAHOO Step Sa 11am	<u>35.00</u>
Friday All Groups F 830pm	1,260.00	<b>Total SF Group Contributions</b>	<b>\$ 9,478.61</b>
Friendly Circle Su 830pm	254.34	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 12,750.57</b>

# Gratitude Month Contributions 2005

Name	Jan. 2005	Name	Jan. 2005
<b>Marin Gratitude Month</b>		Sunset 9'ers W	172.00
Beginners & Closed Tu 7pm & 830pm	368.00	Each Day a New Beginning Tu 7am	143.25
Women on Monday M 7pm	44.57	Fireside Chat Tu 8pm	51.00
<b>Total Marin Gratitude Month</b>	<b>\$ 412.57</b>	Friday All Groups F 830pm	185.00
<b>SF Gratitude Month</b>		The Parent Trap M 1230pm	98.00
Goodlands Su 2pm	80.00	Fell Street Step Su 8pm	35.50
AA Step Study Su 6pm	48.00	Fireside Chat Sa 9pm	139.69
Gold Mine Group M 8pm	46.71	Sunset 11'ers Sa	34.96
Sunset 9'ers Sa	125.94	Saturday Easy Does It Sa 12pm	77.00
Cocanuts Su 9am	101.00	<b>Total SF Gratitude Month</b>	<b>\$ 1,510.40</b>
Tuesday Downtown Tu 8pm	172.35	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,922.97</b>

## Individual Contributions January 2005

Account	Amount	Account	Amount
Individual - Unrestricted	5.00	Honorary Contributions	6.00
	1,500.00		46.00
	62.91		50.00
	44.00		16.00
	150.00		40.15
	250.00		42.00
	500.00	<b>Total Honorary</b>	<b>\$ 200.15</b>
<b>Total Unrestricted</b>	<b>\$ 2,511.91</b>	<b>Total Individual Contributions</b>	<b>\$ 2,712.06</b>

### Just a note

Just wanted to take a moment to thank you for *The Point*. I read it each morning before I begin my day. I appreciate the honesty about recovery and how life can be challenging. It means a lot to me that the authors are local AA'ers, some of whom I know. It is like sitting in an early morning meeting with fellows in recovery. I also enjoy the articles on AA publications as well as discussions on the steps and traditions.

Keep up the great work,

A Friday High-Nooner

### THE BIG BOOK "COMES ALIVE" SEMINAR

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You will need to bring high-liters, Big Book, 12x12,  
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SUNDAYS, 7pm—9pm  
March 12<sup>TH</sup> thru April 23<sup>RD</sup>, 2006

4/02	4 <sup>th</sup> Step -Resentment page 63-67	ERIC W.
	4 <sup>th</sup> Step-Fear page 67-68	MICHELLE J.
4/09	4 <sup>th</sup> Step-Sex page 68-69	LORI Z.
	Into Action 5 <sup>th</sup> through 8 <sup>th</sup> page 76	JAMES M.
4/16	9 <sup>th</sup> step	SEAN/LESLIE
	10 <sup>th</sup> Step- Lifetime Inventory	LESLIE/SEAN
4/23	11 <sup>th</sup> Step	LIZ B.
	12 <sup>th</sup> Step	DON B.

For more information call SEAN S. 415-584-1657 or TONUS A. 415-368-2909

# Too Much Drama

by Anonymous

A.A. meetings are places for me to share my experience, strength, and hope in order for me to not only stay sober, but to also help others achieve sobriety. They are good venues to share what is going on in my life and to check in with the others in the fellowship. In my opinion, however, there are times when the trials and tribulations of my fellow sober alcoholics can turn into content for a good soap opera.

There are some folks who seem to think that they have to give an extremely detailed account of the drama in their lives at every meeting they attend. Not only does it get tiring and monotonous, these diatribes usually take up a lot of time—time that could be shared with others in the room that need to share in a “general way.” Granted, I know that each of us is different and we need to do what it takes to stay sober for another day. But, do we need to

give a blow-by-blow account of our daily drama in the rooms? And take five minutes or more to do it? Aren't accounts like these good for our sponsor's ear or better yet, shared with our “outside help”?

I don't mean to come across as an uncaring, resentful, old, recovering alcoholic. I sincerely care about my fellows in recovery and do my best to support all of those with whom I come in contact. I just feel that caring and respect travel both ways and too much drama thrown on an unsuspecting A.A. meeting can leave one cold. I know, if I don't like it, I can go to another meeting. I can also close my eyes, pray to my Higher Power, and mind my own business. I think our Founding Fathers were onto something when they presented the thought of sharing in a general way, however. Maybe I'll start my own meeting and carry a timer. ↑

## She Completed the Program *(Continued from page 10)*

our Sunday morning hospital meeting. We came to know Lita's family. They expressed their deep appreciation for our weekly meetings and let us know that Lita “lived” for the meetings. Her wonderful niece Cindy would come in before us and get Lita ready for the troop of alcoholics who would gather round her bed, reading from either the Twelve and Twelve, or the Big Book.

As the months wore on, Lita got worse. Some weeks she was totally incoherent. In the summer she was moved to a hospice. A hospice...the reality hit...she was going to die. I understood this fact intellectually, but the idea of losing her was devastating. One week, while alone with her, it all became too much and I began crying. I pretended I was upset about something else. She looked at me and said in her stern voice, which she used occasionally, “Are you going to enough meetings? Are you doing enough service? Working with anyone? Are you saying your daily prayers? I meekly said, “No...not enough.” She said, “Jesus, you are back to where we started, get on track!” I had to smile. True to form, even in her condition, Lita was still saying the difficult words and putting another's needs first. Admonished and humbled, I got a regular commitment and increased my meeting attendance.

Toward the end some would visit during the week. But on Sundays, our little circle of three—Yvonne, John and I—would sit around Lita's bed and talk with her. Together we developed a bond that will be with us

forever. It was a difficult but extraordinary time. We were seeing Lita make the journey into her next life. I told her I was comforted to know that when my life was over, I would see her again. That thought kept me going through those weeks not knowing if each visit was to be the last. I came to understand one day at a time in a new way.

Lita's 29<sup>th</sup> anniversary in sobriety came in October. She wanted a chip. Several people who loved her came to celebrate her 29-year birthday. She had experienced a bad stroke a few days earlier and was not awake when we came. However, the family had arranged a beautiful brunch for us and we all talked and laughed and told stories about this woman who had come to mean so much to all of us.

Later when I gave Lita her chip, she clutched it in her now frail hands and whispered the words, “Thank you.” It was the most heartfelt thank you I had ever heard. A few weeks later she had that chip in sight when she breathed her last breath.

In Alcoholics Anonymous our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. And if we do that to the last day, then, as my husband says, we have completed the program. Lita stayed sober and helped countless alcoholics to achieve and maintain a good sobriety. She did that successfully for 29 years. We miss you, Lita. Thank you for showing us how to complete the program....with grace. ↑

# Surviving Catastrophe

by Rich H.

A lot of words we hear at A.A. meetings no longer have any meaning to me. "Relationship" has come to mean a three-week love affair that didn't work out. Ordinary character shortcomings are now "other issues". "Catastrophe" is the loss of a cell phone inadvertently left on the table at a coffee shop.

For me, true catastrophe struck several times in the 1990's. My teenage daughter became pregnant by a small-time criminal. I was fired from the only executive position I ever held. Just when my family and employment problems were getting resolved I suffered a complete psycho-neurotic collapse, based on early childhood and Vietnam War trauma. Then a trusted spiritual adviser "fired" me when I went on anti-depressant medication, and it took several years of therapy and monitoring before the thoughts of suicide diminished and I could be in conscious contact with God again. In the midst of that nightmare, my beloved wife had to undergo serious, life-changing surgery.

What did I do? First, I increased my meeting schedule from one per day to as many as I could fit into a week, ten to fifteen per week for over a year. At meetings I shared generally that life had become difficult for my family and me, owning my part in losing the job due to arrogance and willfulness. At my home group I asked for prayers and for understanding of my need to use various (non-addictive) psycho-neurotic medications. With my new sponsors and close friends I was very specific on my day-to-day problems, and I called or e-mailed them every day. Second, I increased my prayer from once in the evening to twice a day, minimum, as recommended in the Big Book. In my prayers, I asked God for peace and comfort, and thanked Him for my survival. I mentioned every one of my friends to God, and asked His blessing for them. I had a good friend who had undergone transplant surgery who I talked with for hours, determined to understand and be able to share her peace and faith. Next I got a new sponsor who listened to me and gave me solid, immediate instructions on how to get by, one day at a time. Last, but definitely not least, I looked for new men to sponsor. I learned once again that showing up at meetings and sharing my experience would help newcomers. I trusted that I had something they wanted, because I had been graced with the Promises by then, and shared about how my problems were solved without drinking or using alcohol substitutes.

Ironically, on my 20th A.A. anniversary, after two years of chronic employment problems and everything else I have already mentioned, I got a job offer. It came during my birthday dinner at a restaurant. My daughter and grandson had moved in with my wife and me. Money was very tight, but we got my daughter through college, and my grandson and I bonded beautifully, mostly because I was able to spend so much time with him during my unemployment. The result of taking care of them when they needed it most is that I can look at my reflection in the mirror and see a man who stuck by his family, and fought for their well being. As my wife's health slowly improved, I saw a man who stayed during the catastrophe and helped others and myself to survive.

My recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous gave me strength and courage I never knew I had, and enabled me to walk through my personal health problems without fear, trusting the doctors and thanking God for the medical science that is keeping me alive.

Today my daughter and grandson are thriving. She went on to get a Masters degree and got married to a nice man. My grandson is a scholarship student at an upscale prep school. At fourteen he is still a best buddy. We watch Warriors games together and hang out on the pier in Santa Monica whenever we can. My wife and I are enjoying an amazing life together. After I lost my last job three years ago I received a significant legal settlement from my employer. At the same time the government increased my veteran's compensation, so that I could comfortably retire. My best friend jokes about my luck - how I seem to crawl out of a puddle of...mud with a rose in my teeth. Who knows? I am thunderstruck by God's grace, and in total gratitude for the safety of my family. I use this new leisure time to sponsor even more new men and attend as many meetings as I can.

My heroes are the A.A. members who preceded me and came to meetings and shared openly about how they lost a succession of jobs, how their children got into impossible trouble, how their partners suffered horrible medical problems, how they lost all their money, how they endured life-threatening medical catastrophe, AND HOW THEY DIDN'T DRINK OVER ANY OF IT! †

# IFB Meeting Summary — March 2006

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	Elizabeth L.	High Noon Monday	A*	Omar C.	Tuesday Chip	P
Andy T.	Waterfront	P	Francesca K.	West Portal	P	Orion P.	Marina Dock 6am	A**
Anthony J.	Founders Group	P	Gaspar L.	Keep It Simple	A*	Pascal G.	Monday Night Stag	P
Brian H.	Living Sober with HIV	P	Greg S.	Beginner's Warmup	A*	Patty M.	Huntington Square	P
Bruce K.	Sunset Speaker Step	P	Joe G.	Beginners	P	Penelope P.	Amazing Grace	P
Carol E.	Happy Hour	A**	Joe H.	Gratitude Group	A*	Rebekah D.	Fell Street Step	P
Chris H.	Friendly Circle	P	Judi C.	Tuesday's Daily Reflections	P	Richard R.	We Care	P
Chris P.	Early Start	A**	Julia W.	Sesame Step	A**	Ryan W.	Tiburon BB	P
Chris T.	Keep Coming Back	P	Justin S.	Alumni	A*	Sam C.	Boys Night Out	A*
Creighton B.	Downtown Mill Valley	A*	Karin K.	24 Hour Plan	P	Scott N.	Sunset 11'ers Sat.	P
Curtis S.	Sunday Gay Men's Stag	A**	Larry B.	Castro Discussion	P	Stephanie R.	Live & Let Live	P
Dan Z.	Each Day a New Beginning	P	Lauren H.	Ten Years After	P	Stephen R.	Valencia Smokefree	P
Danna P.	Treasurer	P	Luis M.	High Noon Tuesday	P	Steve N.	Terra Linda Group	P
Daniel B.	Too Early	A*	Lynnore G.	Walk Of Shame	P	Steve S.	Homegroup	P
David B.	Federal Speaker	P	Matt T.	Fairfax Friday Night	P	Tedra M.	Come N Get It	A*
David L.	Work in Progress	P	Maury P.	Central Office Manager	P	Terry B.	High Noon Thursday	A**
David P.	Goodlands	A*	Michael L.	Attitude Adjustment Hour	P	Tim M.	Join the Tribe	A*
Derek D.	Reality Farm	P	Michael S.	Sunset 9'ers Sat.	P	Tom R.	Mill Valley 7AM	A*
Don B.	Friday Fell Street	A*	Monika H.	SFPOA	P	Victor V.	Stepping Up	P
Doug D.	As Bill Sees It Sat 11am	A**	Nicholas L.	Some Are Sicker Than...	P			
Dylan C.	They Stopped in Time	P	Nicholas S.	Sutter St. Beginners	P			

**P = Present; A = Absent; R = Resigned; X = Alternate. 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		Visitors		IFB Liaisons Present	
Brian K.	Eureka Valley Topic Disc.	Brian C.		Larry B.	San Mateo General Service
Heather K.	Serenity Seekers				

Following is an unofficial summary of actions, information, upcoming business and service opportunities discussed at the March 2006 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. Call Steve with any agenda requests at 415-821-1838. Thanks to Don B. for stepping in as recording secretary last month. Tonight we will elect an IFB member to fill the open position on the COC and discuss coffee for this meeting. The 'Anonymous Prom' flyer will be evaluated and the issues of fundraising will be discussed.

**Central Office Manager's Report:** Maury P. gave the report. A list of meetings that do not have a registered Secretary or Treasurer or an IFB Rep and have not contributed within the last year is circulating in an attempt to ID meetings that may no longer exist. Please check the list and bring registration forms to any meetings you attend that are listed. There are five open phone shifts at Central Office. New literature items coming from AA Grapevine in a few weeks. The Central Office pamphlet made it to the General Service Conference agenda. Attended the Northern California Central Office Managers meeting on Friday, February 17th. Five people have joined the Faithful Fivers since the last IFB meeting. Maury will be out of the office March 27-31, 2006.

**Central Office Committee Report:** Joe G. gave the report. Banks are no longer accepting a two signature requirement on accounts. Since the treasurer does the bank reconciliations, the COC voted to remove the treasurer as a check signer and add the past IFB Chair to improve internal controls. We discussed working with the IFB committees to help create protocol for producing announcements, as well as protocol for the committees.

**Treasurer's Monthly Report:** Danna P. gave the report. The net income for January was \$5,646, which is \$2,034 over the budgeted net income of \$3,612. Unrestricted cash as of January 31, 2006 totaled \$58,636 and is more than sufficient to pay the budgeted expenses for three months. Unrestricted cash increased by \$7,673 since December 31st primarily due to the net income for January and a \$1,020 decrease in inventory. Payroll liabilities increased due to an increase in Payroll Taxes over December. Retained Earnings increased by \$27,115, which was the total Net Income for 2005. Likewise, the Net Income line in the Equity section decreased since it currently only reflects net income for January 2006.

### 2. Election for COC

a. **Nominating Committee** – Scott N. gave the report. The committee met twice this month and interviewed the candidates that made themselves available for the COC. Two candidates withdrew. The Nominating Committee recommends Derek D. for the position.

b. **Nominee** – Derek D. spoke to the IFB and gave his qualifications.



c. Vote: For – 31; Against – 0; Abstain – 7

Passed - Derek D. will replace Rudi DiP. on the COC committee until the end of the current term.

### 3. Coffee at SF IFB meeting

a. Review of Findings – Maury P. gave report. The church where the meeting occurs charges \$1 per person for coffee. Coffee can also be made and brought to the meeting location if someone wanted to volunteer to do so. Q: How many people would drink coffee at the meeting? A: 17. Q: Are those people willing to pay for the coffee? A: No.

Motion: Table talking about coffee at the IFB meeting for one year.

For – 27; Against – 4; Abstain – 4 - Motion passes.

Minority opinion wants fair chance to discuss coffee. Discussion is opened up again. Majority agrees to re-vote the last motion.

For – 24; Against – 7; Abstain – 9 - Original motion retains passing status.

Minority opinion voices that a basket can be passed to cover the cost of coffee or someone should be given the option to volunteer to bring coffee. Majority does not open the original motion for another vote. Motion holds that coffee will not be talked about for a year.

### 4. Special Events Funding and Fundraising

a. Special Events Committee in response to the Anonymous Prom flyer

Fran: An apology is offered for offending anyone with the flyer. The Special Events Committee mission statement is read. It is reiterated that part of the mission of the committee is to raise funds. The history of the Anonymous Prom is given as being started by a few AA members outside the committee who just wanted a fun event.

Maury: The history of the formation of the Special Events Committee is given. A long time ago, the IFB voted not to have fundraisers. Later on they decided to have events for the primary purpose of fellowship. A motion to reverse the original motion was needed in order to hold events. The new motion put forth was to create a Special Events committee. The first event ended up making money and that set the tone for fundraising but not the intention.

Steve R.: The context of the confusion about the intention of the fundraising committee is stated as the Central Office was in need of money at the time the committee was born.

Don: The committee does events and needs to be self-supporting and make money to pay for their expenses. They need seed money but do not need to raise funds for the fellowship directly.

Gerard: The committee is not being inappropriate by raising money for Central Office.

Alejandro: The Special Events committee should be for planning events. Another committee can be created to raise funds.

Brian: The primary concern of the committee in planning this event was about unity. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

Fran: The Chair of the Special Events Committee wants the mission statement revisited.

Action: The Chair of the IFB asks the committee to re-write the mission statement and bring it back to the IFB for consideration.

Rebecca: The problem with the flyer is that it states that the event's purpose is to raise money. The problem is that the fundraising is primary, not fellowship.

Action: The Special Events Committee will remove the "Why" from the flyer.

b. Special Events Committee request for seed money for Anonymous Prom \$1,000 seed money is requested for the event, which is on April 1st at the Urban Life Center.

Motion: Approve \$1,000 seed money for the Special Events committee towards the Anonymous Prom.

For – 35; Against – 0; Abstain – 4 - Motion passes.

c. Special Events Committee monthly report: Fran gave the report. The Founder's Day event is coming up. Last year the IFB allotted \$1,500 for the

event.

Action: This item is tabled for discussion next month.

7th Tradition and reading of the 12 Traditions: \$75 collected

### 5. Group Rep Reports

None given.

### 6. IFB Committee Reports

Literature Review Committee: Written report submitted

The Point Editorial Committee: Maury P. gave the report. The committee decided that it is inappropriate to run an article about the Alano Club (as the Club requested) announcing room rental information.

Website Committee: Dan gave the report. The on-line 12th Step concept will likely manifest as an email list. Meetings that used to be designated as either 'Gay', 'Lesbian', 'Transsexual', and 'Bisexual' will now all fall under one designation. The meeting search is broken out into several categories such as time, name, and location. Please check the maps associated with your meeting to make sure they are correct. The committee meets the second Wednesday at 6pm at Central Office.

Special Needs Committee: Pene gave the report. The Point is featuring the Special Needs committee this month with articles reflecting various disabilities. Take the Special Needs Survey to your groups for input. Marin requested a singer at one of their meetings. Check out your meetings for wheelchair accessibility and report back to the committee. The Literature Review Committee will create a pamphlet for the Special Needs Committee. The Committee meets on the fourth Tuesday at 2pm at Central Office

Trusted Servants Workshop Committee: Monika gave the report. The committee met on February 16th. The date for the next workshop is March 11th from 11:30am - 1:00pm. Pizza will be served. Six volunteers are needed for set-up and other help. Contact Monika to volunteer at monihar2002@yahoo.com.

### 7. IFB Standing Committee Reports

SF Teleservice: Victor gave the report. The February orientation was attended by two volunteers who signed up for three open shifts. There are now five open shifts. There are now coordinators for all seven days of the week! The annual Teleservice Volunteer Appreciation dinner was a great success. An effort is being made to collect email address for Central Office to make it easier to send out updates. The committee meets the third Monday at 6:30pm at Central Office.

SF PI/CPC: Bruce K. gave the report. The annual elections were held. Jill H. is the new chair. The Committee meets on the second Monday at 7pm at Central Office

### 8. Non-IFB Liaison Reports

Bridging the Gap: Matt gave the report. The Marin committee is gearing up again after a long period of inaction. They are taking patients from detoxes to meetings. A phone list is being created and officers are being elected. 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 gave the report. Volunteers are needed. People are needed to commit to take care of new meetings being started and build up a roster. 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.

### 9. Open Forum

Pene: What can a meeting do about people who share about non-alcoholic issues at mixed gender meetings?

The next IFB meeting will be held Wednesday, April 5, 2006 at the First Unitarian Universalist Church at 1187 Franklin Street, San Francisco at 7:00pm

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren H.,  
IFB Secretary

## F.E.A.R.

by Victor V.

F\*\*\* Everything And Run. And run I did from feeling, as many alcoholics do. I ran away by drinking so that I would not have to feel anything at all. I was full of FEAR of guilt, shame, relationships, life, death, etc. I was afraid of failing at all of life. These feelings were bottled up inside of me with no way of escape. I only knew how to keep them hidden and not feel them. Alcohol helped numb me and gave me a false sense that everything is okay. False Evidence Appearing Real. Alcohol helped to bury my fears deeper and deeper. It brought on more fears which appeared real, and gave me no escape as long as I continued to drink. Alcohol gave me a false sense of being strong, successful, tough as nails, and I thought I had life under control. All of a sudden I was forty years old, divorced, without my children, two homes gone, my business was almost gone, and I was moving again to a new city to start over. I was willing to lose all of these things, but I would not give up alcohol because I was afraid to live life without it. I did not want to admit that I had failed at life and I certainly did not want any one else to know that I had failed.

Fear was part of my life. "It was an evil and corroding thread; the fabric of our existence was shot through with it. It set in motion a trains of circumstances which brought us misfortune we felt we didn't deserve. But did not we ourselves set the ball rolling?" (*Alcoholics Anonymous* pg. 67 )

A.A. told me to go to meetings. I went to meetings and listened to people share their experience, strength, and hope. I learned from people sharing at meetings that fear is at the root of all of my defects of character. People told me to get a sponsor, work the steps, get a commitment, and go to a meeting everyday. By working the steps and going to meetings I began to develop a faith in a power greater than myself (the A.A. group). I learned what my character defects were and that they were fear based. I learned that my higher power does not want me to live in fear. By

working the steps daily I have come to realize a life full of freedom and joy. As a result of working the steps daily I no longer live life by practicing my character defects as I did when I was drinking. I am now able to identify the fears in my life. When they pop up, I can rely on my faith in a Higher Power. I can take action and deal with my fears head on so that my character defects don't surface. The tools of the A.A. program allow me to deal with my fears. "When fear persisted, we knew it for what it was, and we began to handle it. We began to see each adversity as a God given opportunity to develop the kind of courage which is born of humility, rather than bravado." (*As Bill Sees It* pg.91) As long as I continue to put the tools of this program to use and work through my fears, spiritual growth is unavoidable.

Fear will always be part of my life and I will never be free of it. I was given faith by the people in A.A. that I could overcome fear by finding a power greater than myself. The constant sharing of happiness and joy in the midst of life's journey by happy, joyous, and free alcoholics, shows me that I too can be happy, joyous, and free.

Fear has now become a challenge. It has become a road to spiritual growth. Working through my fears makes me a stronger and wiser human being. I used to live life by F\*\*\* Everything And Run, but now I have learned to live life by Face Everything And Recover. Alcoholics Anonymous has given me a new life by going to meetings, getting a sponsor, working the steps, having service commitments, and sponsoring others. As a result I don't have to drink any more. Fear is overcome one day at a time by taking action and living in the solution which A.A. has taught me. Do I still feel afraid? Sometimes I do, but now I know how to work through it in a positive, constructive way which helps pave the road of spiritual progress. 📌

## *The Point* Editorial Policy

*The Point* is published monthly to inform A.A. members about business and meeting affairs in 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 to all A.A. members.

(Continued on page 19)

# Financial Statement

January 2006 - Intercounty Fellowship of AA

	<u>Jan 06</u>		<u>Jan 06</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense		Postage	
Income		Bulk Mail	200.00
Contributions from Groups		Total Postage	200.00
Group Contributions	<u>12,750.57</u>	Rent - Office	3,833.75
Total Contributions from Groups	12,750.57	Insurance	459.50
Contributions from Individuals		Internet Expense	77.18
Individual - Unrestricted	2,511.91	Office Supplies	286.23
Faithful Fiver	627.00	Shipping	-39.85
Honorary Contributions	<u>200.15</u>	Repair & Maintenance	263.72
Total Contributions from Individuals	3,339.06	Security System	33.50
Gratitude Month		Telephone	240.19
Gratitude Month - Groups	<u>1,922.97</u>	Phone Book Listings	76.50
Total Gratitude Month	1,922.97	Utilities	169.17
Sales - Bookstore	9,641.82	Total Expense	15,434.71
Newsletter Subscript.	<u>44.24</u>	Net Ordinary Income	6,151.64
Total Income	27,698.66	Other Income/Expense	
Cost of Goods Sold		Other Income	
Credit Card Processing Fees	138.45	Interest Income	88.31
Cost of Books Sold	<u>5,973.86</u>	Total Other Income	88.31
Total COGS	<u>6,112.31</u>	Other Expense	
Gross Profit	21,586.35	Depreciation Expense	354.36
Expense		Amortization Expense	238.78
Employee Expenses		Total Other Expense	593.14
Wages & Salaries	7,585.50	Net Other Income	<u>-504.83</u>
Employer Tax Expenses	1,106.24	<b>Net Income</b>	<b><u>\$ 5,646.81</u></b>
Health Benefits	788.00		
Workers Comp Ins.	<u>355.08</u>		
Total Employee Expenses	9,834.82		
Bank Charges	0.00		

## Editorial Policy *(Continued from page 18)*

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](mailto:thepoint@aasf.org).

This policy is subject to revision. 

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**April 2006**

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