

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

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

The Point

May 2006

A publication
of the Intercountry 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 Intercountry 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 Intercountry 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.

Mom in the ICU

by Kathleen C.

In the Intensive Care Unit, my two sisters and I clung to each other as our mother clung to life. Chemotherapy for cancer had thrown her into septic shock. She spiked a high fever, suffered a minor heart attack and was receiving oxygen, transfusions and powerful antibiotics. She was heavily sedated but flailed around so violently she had to be tied to her bed. We were all embarking on the Third Step ride of our lives.

When my father had cancer eighteen years before, I only had one year sober. I was still numb. But now, with nineteen years of sobriety, I was actually feeling my feelings. I was scared and angry. Fortunately one of my sisters had gone on-line and found an Alano club close to the hospital. We ducked out for a noon A.A. meeting. We shared why we were in town and afterwards the local A.A.s offered encouragement, sympathy and prayers.

When we returned to the ICU, a compassionate nurse took us aside and explained what an ordeal it would be for Mom to be resuscitated and intubated if her heart and breathing stopped. We conferred in the waiting room, collapsed into each other's arms and wept floods of tears. We never thought that we would have to make such a decision. It was a bittersweet gift of sobriety to be the ones our mother entrusted with this responsibility. I thought of the Eleventh Step – and prayed for knowledge of God's will for us and for Mom and the power to carry that out. We finally changed her status to DNR-DNI – Do Not Resuscitate, Do Not Intubate. We resigned ourselves to losing our mother. We turned her life over to the care of a higher power.

For days she sank deeper into fevered delirium. She pulled off the oxygen mask and the blood pressure monitor. Sometimes she knew us and sometimes she didn't. I had just hung up the phone with Hospice when my youngest sister called with the good news – Mom was sitting up in bed chomping on a piece of chicken and demanding the parsley garnish too!

To my surprise I was angry. Damn! I had resigned myself to my mother's death. Now it looked as though she was going to live, at least for a while. She still had cancer; she probably wouldn't survive another round of chemo. One day at a time, I had to practice the Third Step and let my mother's life run its course while I prayed to know the right thing to do. After hugs of relief my sisters went home.

(Continued on page 6)

May 2006....

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 FIRST MON Archives Committee, Central Office, 6 pm Spirit of SF Committee, Central Office, 7:30 pm	2	3 FIRST WED Intercounty Fellowship Board Orientation 6 pm, Meeting 7 pm, Star of the Sea Church 180 Harrison St., Sausalito	4	5	6 <u>12th Step Workshop</u> 10am to 11am, Central Office
7	8 SECOND MON SF Public Information Committee Central Office, 7 pm	9 SECOND TUE SF Bridging The Gap 1187 Franklin St. at Geary, SF, 6:30 pm SF General Service 1187 Franklin St., SF Orientation: 7 pm Meeting: 8 pm Marin H&I 1360 Lincoln, San Rafael Orientation: 6:15 pm Bus. Meeting: 7:15 pm	10 SECOND WED 12th Step Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm Marin Bridging the Gap 1411 Lincoln Ave., San Rafael 6:45 pm	11 SECOND THU Website Committee Central Office, 6 pm	12	13 SF PI/ CPC <u>SpeakerWorkshop</u> 10am Central Office
14	15 THIRD MON SF Teleservice Central Office, 6:30 pm Marin General Service 9 Ross Valley Rd, San Rafael GSR Sharing: 7 pm District Meeting: 8 pm	16 THIRD TUE San Mateo General Service St. Andrews Church 15th & El Camino Real San Mateo, 7:30 pm	17 THIRD WED Literature Review Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm	18	19	20
21	22	23 FOURTH TUE 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	24	25 FOURTH THU Marin PI Committee, Alano Club 1360 Lincoln Ave, San Rafael – 7:30 pm LAST THU SF H&I Old First Church, 1751 Sacramento St. SF Orientation: 7:15 pm Committee Meeting: 8:00 pm	26	27 FOURTH SAT General Service CNCA Meeting 320 N. McDowell Petaluma DCMCs: 10 am Business Meeting: 12:30 pm
28 FOURTH SUN Living Sober Convention Committee 1668 Bush, SF 5:30 pm	29 Memorial Day Central Office Closed	30	31			

From the Editor...

Welcome to the May issue of *The Point*. Ah, the month of May, a time of warmth, spring flowers, fresh breezes and the joy of living, especially for those of us fortunate enough to have found A.A. This month also brings us Mother's Day and therefore our cover story, *Mom in the ICU*, written by one of our committee members. Many of us will relate to this beautiful and sad/sweet story. Losing a parent, even when in sobriety, is no easy thing but this story shows the strength and courage that A.A. principles can instill.

Also, check out Page 7 for *Dear Alky* and a new feature we're introducing- a sort of "Letters to the Editor" section called *The Bulletin Board*. As careful readers will recall, our esteemed contributor, *Dear Alky*, was threatened with extinction. After several months of no questions directed at our dear *Dear Alky*, it was naturally assumed that the San Francisco A.A. community is completely recovered and not in need of such lofty guidance. Last month saw a graceful bow and a soft *adieu* when suddenly, there appeared not one, but two questions! We couldn't just ignore these questions so now it seems *Dear Alky* is with us for while yet... It's all up to you, folks. As one of our committee members put it, "*Dear Alky* now gets a monthly reprieve based on the condition of continuing incoming questions."

And as usual, a reminder that we always accept contributions in the form of articles for publication in *The Point*. Either shorter 300-400 word pieces or longer 600-750 words pieces to be considered for our cover story are always welcome. Remember, *The Point* is yours. We always welcome new committee members, too! Enjoy!

In service,

The Point Committee

Joke of the Month

AA Definitions:

Group conscience: the consensus referred to in our 2nd Tradition.

Group conscious: any business meeting where a majority of those present are actually awake.

Group couscous: a North African dish popular at anniversary potlucks.

Group concupiscence: a rare but not unheard-of phenomenon at men's stag meetings.

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., Rick K.,
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 or call 415.674.1821.



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MEETING CHANGES

New Meetings:

Mon	7:30 pm	San Rafael	WOMEN WHO DRANK TOO MUCH, 684 Pt. San Pedro Rd. (Bk, SpD, Wo)
Wed	5:00 pm	Hayes Valley	THANKS GOD, S.F. Alano Club, 1748 Market St. (Di, Men)
Thu	12:00 pm	Hayes Valley	LUNCH BUNCH, S.F. Alano Club, 1748 Market St. (SD)
Sat	1:15 pm	Hayes Valley	SERVICE CONNECTED, S.F. Alano Club, 1748 Market St. (SD)

Meeting Changes:

Tue	3:30 pm	Novato	CLOSED WOMEN'S STEP STUDY, 1473 S. Novato Blvd. (1 Hour, 15 minute Meeting)
Thu	8:00 pm	Park Merced	PARKSIDE, 777 Brotherhood Way (was 8:30pm, & no Wheelchair Access)
Fri	6:30 pm	Mission	FRIDAY NIGHT WOMEN'S MEETING, 3557 20th St./ Lexington St. (was 601 Dolores, 7:30pm)
Sat	4:00 pm	McLaren Park	CROCKER PARK, 600 Italy Ave./ Naples St. 3rd Floor, ring bell (was Italy Ave/ Moscow St.)

No Longer Meeting:

Reported Missing:

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 March 2006

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

San Francisco

Afro American Beginners Sat. 8pm; Big Book Study Sun. 11:30am; Chips Ahoy Tue. 12pm; Epiphany Thu. 8pm; Federal Speaker Sun. 12pm; Fogwatch Tue. 7pm; Founders' Group Sat. 5pm; Friday Night Special Fri. 8pm; Friday Night Women's Meeting Fri. 6:30pm; Goodlands Sun. 2pm; Huntington Square Wed. 6:30pm; No Regrets Tue. 7am; Safe Haven Tue. 7pm; Second Chance Thu. 2:15pm; Service Connected Sat. 1:15pm; Sober 5150's Wed 8pm; (The Spawn of) Straitjacket Mon. 9am; Spiritual Workshop Mon. 7pm; Sunset 9'ers Fri. 9am; They Stopped in Time Mon. 8pm; Too Young Sun. 8:30pm; Wake Up Call Sat. 10am; We Care Tue. 12pm; Work in Progress Sat. 7pm; Women Living Sober Sat. 10am

Marin

Monday Nooners Mon. 12pm; Pathfinder's Tue. 12pm; Saturday Serenity Sat. 8pm; Women Who Drank Too Much Mon. 7:30pm

CONTRIBUTIONS

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

ONGOING MEMORIALS

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

ANNIVERSARIES 🎵

Pat M. 18 years
Michael W. 6 years

Coming Up!

BRISBANE BREAKFAST BUNCH

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

DATE	SPEAKER	FROM
05/07	Victor V.	Sunset 9'ers Sa, SF
05/14	Pete S.	West Bay Alano Club, DC
05/21	Peggy H.	Thursday Night Women's, SF
05/28	Jill M.	Steppin' Up, SF

TUESDAY DOWNTOWN

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

DATE	SPEAKER	LOS	HOME GROUP
05/02	Damon B.	11 years	Friendly Circle
05/09	Alice W.	11 years	Mill Valley 7AM
05/16	TBA		
05/23	Roslyn L.	30 years	East Bay Fellowship
05/30	Bob A.	24 years	S.F. Fellowship

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
05/05	Six O'clock Step	Georgia L.	Friendly Circle	05/12	Sutter St. Beginners	Terry H.	Marin
05/19	Th. Night Women's	Bob A.	Homegroup	05/26	Berkeley Fellowship	Robert C.	Berkeley Fellowship



Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous

12th-Step Workshop

Saturday, May 6th, 2006
at 10:00 a.m.

1821 Sacramento St., San Francisco, CA

"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."

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.

Call Central Office at 674-1821 if you have any questions! e-mail: aa@aasf.org

Workin' It with the Dogs

by Jennifer J.

“Remove these fears and direct my attention to what you would have me be”

This is my mantra in life, but especially in my work. I am a dog walker and trainer. I love my job. My job is fun. I get to be outside most of the day, hugging cute doggies. Also, my job is extremely challenging and at times terribly stressful. It can also be frightening and in rare cases, dangerous.

I spend my whole day with cute dogs at beautiful beach locales. Why would someone like me need a Twelve-Step program at work? For starters a good part of my day is spent driving around San Francisco, picking up dogs in my truck. That right there should say something about my basic spiritual condition. I would not be able to do my job without the program of Alcoholics Anonymous and the support of my sponsor and friends. I would be a monster. Have you ever been cut off in traffic? Some days I get cut off ten times. When I leave the house in the morning I make a pact with my Higher Power that if there is a question of who gets to cross the intersection first at the stop sign I will always concede to the other driver, even if they are being super pushy or don't actually stop all the way. This ritual is not optional; it's like brushing my teeth or eating food. It must be done for my survival. And what keeps me from crashing my truck into other drivers on an hourly basis? It's called DIVINE INTERVENTION. Now, keep in mind that logically I know that people on the road are not trying to kill me, but sometimes I think it anyway. It's personal. They are out to get me. That's when I repeat the Serenity Prayer over and over and over until this feeling passes.

Six years ago I started my dog walking business, with MUCH fear. I was scared I would not be able to support myself. I was scared I would lose a dog, or that because I have a copy of a client's house key, they might accuse me of stealing their couch. I was nervous at the park thinking that dogs would fight, or run away. I started small, walking one dog on a leash. Then two. Someone up there was keeping me from taking too much on, I swear. I was being taken care of. Then I got sober! Thank goodness.

Over the next year I was given the opportunity to take on a small group of dogs given up by someone leaving the business. My new task would be to let six dogs I had just met off-leash all at once at a park. Imagine what went through my head -- all these dogs will be lost and it will be my fault. What will happen then? Prison? Would I be put to death? I can be a doomsday thinker when left to my own devices. I am so grateful not to be left to my own devices very often now.

Since that very scary day with that group of dogs, I have walked over one hundred different dogs. None have been lost, seriously injured or killed. I myself have not been seriously injured or killed. I am not homeless; in fact, I am able to support myself. And no one has accused me of taking a couch. Whew! I have had some major fears, yet over the past five years in the program it has been revealed to me that I have not died from feeling scared. That is one of the comforting thoughts that keep me in the game, sticking my neck out -- taking necessary chances in the name of bettering myself and hopefully sharing my experience, strength and hope to the fullest extent. ↑

Mom in the ICU (Continued from page 1)

For two weeks she hung on. By then she could no longer eat. She struggled to breathe. One afternoon I called my sisters - they should probably book flights and come as soon as they could. I spent that night on a cot in Mom's hospital room.

She said she had trouble with the noise. I asked if she wanted me to close the door to the busy hallway. “No,” she replied, and pointed to her chemo-bald head. “Inside.” “Oh,” I answered. “You want to quiet the noise inside your mind?” She nodded. I told her, “Sometimes I just say the Serenity Prayer to myself over and over - God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.” She nodded again, smiled and slept. My A.A. tools had come to me with no thought on my part. With

no mental defense to prepare me for this experience, I was running on my past program - the meetings and step work with my sponsor and the sober women I work with.

The next afternoon my sisters arrived and we gathered around Mom's bed. This time there were no monitors, no IV bags, only a plastic catheter in her vein, where the nurses injected the morphine which helped her to breathe more easily. We sang to her, as my youngest sister played guitar. We hugged her and whispered that we were there and that we loved her. She smiled and breathed more and more slowly. As we held her hands and gazed into her seemingly sleeping face, she slipped away. We let her go. To God. How did we cope with our mother's death? The same way we coped with our own lives. We worked the steps, went to meetings, and didn't drink between meetings. ↑

Dear Alky

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

Dear Alky,

I am many years clean and sober and now have recently attended Al-anon meetings to deal with childhood issues of alcoholism in my family. I am wondering how to effectively work two programs and do the 12 steps for each program?

Double Winner

Dear Double Winner,

Each program is independent of the other, but as with A.A. and Alanon, the organizations, you will probably find that your two Twelve Step programs complement each other. Just as the people who most want us A.A.'s to stay sober are the Alanons in our lives, so your Alanon program will support your A.A. program and make your sobriety all the better for it. As it says in "To Wives" in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, "If God can solve the age-old riddle of alcoholism, He can solve your problems too. We wives [husbands, lovers, parent, children, friends] found that, like everybody else, we were afflicted with pride, self-pity, vanity and all the things which go to make up the self-centered person; and we were not above selfishness or dishonesty. As our husbands [whoever] began to apply spiritual principles in their lives, we began to see the desirability of doing so too." *Alcoholics Anonymous*, page 116.

If you take care of your spiritual condition, the twelve steps can change your life, in whichever program you work them.

Alky



How do I effectively work two programs?

Dear Alky,

The eleventh step states one should **ONLY** pray for knowledge of God's will and the power to carry it out. This seems rather limiting to me and a possible oversight in the instructions of thoroughly following this path. I seem to stay so much closer to God when I pray for issues and help on a more direct communication. I feel I stay more focused and hear answers more clearly when I can pray for strength, patience, focus at work rather than just praying for knowledge of God's will and the power to carry it out.

Sometimes I don't think I hear any answers of what his will is for me. Any ideas?

Willing to Pray

Dear Willing,

The Eleventh Step involves not only talking to God in prayer, but also listening to God in meditation. "Into Action" in *Alcoholics Anonymous* suggests that we say "a prayer that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems. We ask especially for freedom from self-will, and are careful to make no request for ourselves only. We may ask for ourselves, however, if others will be helped. We are careful never to pray for our own selfish ends." *Alcoholics Anonymous*, page 87. In other words, be careful what you pray for. You are probably on safer ground asking your Higher Power to show you the way.

Alky

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



Announcing a New Feature in *The Point!* The Bulletin Board!

The Bulletin Board will be a place for local A.A.s to express their opinions on anything related to A.A. Any submissions will be discussed by *The Point* committee for inclusion and lightly edited for style, not content. Send us your concerns, your vision, your experience strength and hope! Just don't send us your resentments!

We've got plenty of our own, thank you very much!

"I don't know what I want, but I want a lot of it!"

"Thank You for Sharing!"

Submit your opinions by email to thepoint@aaaf.org or call 415.674.1821 for more information.

"*Alcoholics Anonymous* has given me a new life by going to meetings, getting a sponsor, working the steps, having service commitments, and sponsoring others."

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

Special Events Committee *by Fran K.*

The Special Events Committee has been ongoing since its creation in 2004. This Committee was created to provide the IFB with suggestions and ideas in the form of Special Events (A.A.-related meetings, workshops, picnics, dances, etc.) and to encourage fellowship and unity among A.A. groups in San Francisco and Marin.

When I first became a part of the IFB I wanted to be more a part of the A.A. community as a whole, not just a part of the small community in which I attend meetings. As my Higher Power would have it, in late 2004 I joined the newly created Special Events Committee.

The first event was the infamous Bingo evening, lovingly referred to by many as "Trailer Trash Bingo." Special Events was now on the San Francisco A.A. map. We have our events to show that anyone willing can have fun and still be sober. We are not a glum lot. It is a committee that is all about unifying A.A. members whether we have three hours or fifty years of sobriety.

In June 2005 we helped organize a Founders Day event, which was a combined effort between San Francisco General Service and the Intercounty Fellowship. At Founders day we had a meeting, food, a sobriety countdown, dancing, and, of course, lots of coffee and desserts. Four months later we organized Oktoberfest—a picnic in the park, with games, food and fellowship. The picnic taught me to let go, let God and reach out when I needed to. I freaked out the morning of the picnic because it had rained the night before and I had some doubt about being able to pull it off. I spoke with two committee members. Both said the same thing: it's not in our hands, someone more powerful is in charge and that's not us. It turned out to be one of the best days ever for me. The fellowship was light and breezy with everyone getting to know each other. It was an amazing sober day.

To end 2005 we once again combined efforts with San Francisco General Service in celebration of Unity Day. The event was a wonderful time with a Halloween theme and another chance for fellowship and the opportunity to learn about AA service. The kick-off event for 2006 for the Special Events Committee of the IFB was the Anonymous Prom 2006 on April 1st. We hope you enjoyed it. More than 300 people were in attendance!

I feel truly blessed for the opportunity to be part of this Special Events Committee and the people I have met within it. I hope one day that some of you take on a commitment like this one. Or perhaps you may want to volunteer your services to our Committee.

Hope to see you on this path of happy destiny, one day at a time. †



You don't have to be a part of the IFB to get involved in Special Events! Attend the Committee Meeting on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:30pm at Central Office. The next meeting is May 23, 2006. Everyone is welcome!

Big Book Study: Chapter Four—We Agnostics

By A Local Sot

“The Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive” and. . . “it finally beat us into a state of reasonableness.” Thus “We Agnostics,” the fourth chapter of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, paradoxically describes the essence of the spiritual path A.A. has come to typify.

Couched in the language of Judeo-Christian theology, Chapter Four nevertheless strives to maintain a universal stance on the “God” question, broadly opening the door through which so many of us have walked.

Even those of us decidedly non-theistic in our spiritual approach have found a welcoming hand in Chapter Four.

“Much to our relief, we discovered we did not need to consider another's conception of God. Our own conception, however inadequate, was sufficient to make the approach and to effect a contact with Him. As soon as we admitted the possible existence of a Creative Intelligence, a Spirit of the Universe underlying the totality of things, we began to be possessed of a new sense of power and direction, provided we took other simple steps. We found that God does not make too hard terms with those who seek Him. To us, the Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive; never exclusive or forbidding to those who earnestly seek. It is open, we believe, to all men.” (p. 46, *Alcoholics Anonymous*)

This alcoholic believes that even the most hardened and cynical among us can find a chink through which to see the magnificent glory of the universe around us in Chapter Four. The words in the chapter give encouragement and hope. We find meaning and purpose and the power we were lacking to overcome our most dire, self-induced sufferings.

“Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves.” (p. 45, *Alcoholics Anonymous*)

It is a demonstrable fact that we see the universe through the lens of our understanding. Our understanding of the nature of reality flavors and colors all our experiences. Great thinkers from the



“Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves.”

beginning of recorded history have recognized that even if there is no God, humankind would have to invent one for the very reason that left to our own devices in a hostile and overwhelming world, we are powerless!

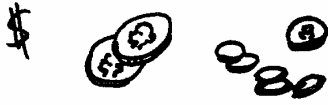
Chapter Four illuminates a path through our faulty conceptions of life. Our fundamental nihilism ultimately led us to seek salvation in the bottle. Self-reliance and self-centered actions got us absolutely nowhere. But, “When we saw others solve their problems by a simple reliance upon the Spirit of the Universe, we had to stop doubting the power of God. Our ideas did not work. But the God idea did.” (p. 52, *Alcoholics Anonymous*)

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines an agnostic as “1. A person who holds the view that any ultimate reality (as God) is unknown and probably unknowable; broadly: one who is not committed to believing in either the existence or the non-existence of God or a god. 2. A person unwilling to commit to an opinion about something.”

Active alcoholics of my type believe only in ourselves, and the bottle. “Besides a seeming inability to accept much on faith, we often found ourselves handicapped by obstinacy, sensitiveness, and unreasoning prejudice.” (p. 47-8, *Alcoholics Anonymous*) Here Chapter Four describes the essence of alcoholic thinking, summed up elsewhere as “Contempt prior to investigation.” It seems that our own “unreasoning” or even “reasoning” prejudice is what kills so many of us.

Taking on the weight of the world, we decry faith with cynical contempt as a delusion of the sentimental. We fail to see the strength that faith requires and the strength that it bestows. It is this faith in a “Power greater than ourselves,” be it a group of drunks, God, Truth, or the Clear Light of Bliss, that will lead us from the darkness of alcoholic oblivion to the sunlight of the spirit. May you find that now. ↑

Don't forget that *The Point* (and a whole lot more!) is available at the Central Office website: www.aasf.org.



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



Making Amends to Family by Michael F.

I thought I was off the hook. As I reviewed my 8th step list with my sponsor, he said that all I needed to do with my family (mother, father, 2 sisters and 3 brothers) was make a living amends. I was to “live sober and treat them with respect and courtesy.” I secretly thought to myself, “What a deal!” This seemed so simple compared to the pile of money I had to pay back, and the face-to-face encounters with former employers, friends and lovers. A little courtesy and respect seemed like a walk in the park.

At 25, when I sobered up, my finances and lack of social skills left me single and living with my parents. My sponsor’s advice was to go slowly, not make major decisions, and take it easy. I took his advice and things went quietly for the first year. But towards the end of that year, in a fit of rigorous honesty, I made it clear to my parents that I was gay.

My family had a rough time digesting the news. Except for my Dad, they didn’t know what to do or say. Many years before I got sober, I confessed my drinking and gayness to my pastor, who promptly primed my Dad on how to handle the situation. In turn, my father had a talk with me and laid down the law. He told me that as long as I kept things [my sexuality] quiet, and left the family out of it, he would keep my secret. Being as sick as my secrets, I drank for another six years, attempting to hide my identity with the aid of the bottle.

By the end of my first year, I finally let go of my secret and came out to my family. My Dad was true to his word. At a little over a year sober he banished and disinherited me. The amends he wanted was to never see me again. He didn’t. Nine years later he died. His last instructions about me were to make sure I didn’t get invited to the funeral. A cousin sent me a copy of the obituary.

Lots of accusations later, I was preparing to return to Phoenix for my first family visit in more than a decade. My instruction from my new sponsor was to offer to my family some of the healing I had received from the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. From then on, there were many more visits and specific amends made.

My Mom died about 15 years later. I was the one at her bedside when she passed. Comfort and compassion had grown out of the courtesy and respect I had been practicing, admittedly haltingly for all these years. The living amends took me a long time, but the gift in making them was becoming a part of the family I had been born in. It is nice to have two families now, the one I was born in, and the one I received when I joined A.A.

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 becoming a Faithful Fiver.

Literature Review *The Best of Bill*

by Karin K.



These essays discuss the spiritual principles that have helped millions of people recover from alcoholism...

This slim, pocket-sized volume, written by Bill W. and first published in 1988, contains five articles covering the topics of faith, fear, honesty, humility, and love, and concludes with the essay "Why Alcoholics Anonymous is Anonymous."

First published in the *A.A. Grapevine*, in the late 50's and early 60's, these writings discuss the guiding spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. Bill's down-to-earth, no nonsense style offers the reader the benefit of his personal journey in sobriety and the collective wisdom of A.A. helping alcoholics to recover from their disease. *The Best of Bill* has the perspective of a co-founder who has persevered through the birth, early years, and young adulthood of A.A. and has paused to take inventory and to admit to God, to himself, and to other human beings the exact nature of his wrongs.

In the article on faith, Bill relates the story of his encounter with a doctor whom he concluded was an unbeliever and felt compelled to convert. Many years later, after the doctor's death, he learned of the man's life of humility, dedication and unselfishness. Bill admitted that while he had the gift of faith, spiritual pride prevented him

from sharing that faith with his fellow alcoholics. A reminder that we must find our own spiritual path.

Bill discusses in the essay on fear the gift of faith and the ego-reducing properties of the A.A. Steps and Traditions, instrumental in relieving his fears and for the survival of A.A.. The A.A. antidote to fear is a spiritual awakening. The practice of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in our personal lives can provide release from fear and anxiety.

The essay on honesty confronts the alcoholic's capacity for self-deception and indiscriminate truth-telling and the consequences to our personal integrity. Bill admits that his own arrogance regarding his virtue in business provided a comfortable cloak under which he could hide other flaws and for years prevented him from taking inventory. Conversely, the Ninth Step cautions that the truth can injure as well as heal, and that we must examine our own motives for telling the truth if it should possibly be injurious to another. Our integrity depends on our willingness to be honest with ourselves. The allegory Bill narrates in the essay on humility depicts his personal assessment of his ability to stay on the path between guilt and pride. "Guilt aims at self-destruction. Pride aims at the destruction of

(Continued on page 15)

What are YOU Looking At?!

by Anonymous

There comes a time in sobriety, at least in mine, when one must deal with differing views, opinions, and personalities. It is great to realize that, although very alike in our drinking histories, we can be extremely different when it comes to just about everything else in living a sober life. Just how do I "practice these principles in all my affairs" when someone really bothers me?

I get agitated sometimes when someone shares in a meeting and talks about things I personally don't agree with. My judgment committee begins and before the speaker is through, a major resentment has developed. I also get irritated when people compare one A.A. meeting to another or one city's type of A.A. to another. Just who is judging who, here? I like the meetings I go to and the San Francisco brand of A.A. is all I know. If those people like their old cities' meetings so much – then go back there.

OK, now that you can see how my minor restlessness can quickly escalate into criticism or retaliation; let me

tell you how I can live in the solution around it. There are a few fantastic slogans in A.A. that deal with this type of thing. One is "Live and Let Live" and the other is "Take what you need and leave the rest." I personally find myself following the latter slogan quite frequently in A.A. meetings and in the world. Another tool in my spiritual toolbox is the concept of open-mindedness and acceptance of others. I am allowed to have an opinion about things and so are other people. Do I need to power-drive and force my will on someone with whom I don't agree? I've tried that many times in the past and I know it doesn't work.

Ultimately, I've also learned to simply close my eyes, breathe, and meditate on the Serenity Prayer or some other Higher Power thing which usually gets me through that moment of hostility. Look around a meeting sometime when some "controversial" topic is being discussed. You'll probably notice a lot of closed eyes and deep breathing going on. It must work. ↑

AA Group Contributions - February 2006

Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous - San Francisco and Marin Counties

Name	Feb. 2006	YTD	Name	Feb. 2006	YTD
Fellowship			All Together Now Th 8pm	58.24	160.20
Brisbane Breakfast Bunch	38	38.00	Any Lengths Sat 930am	142.8	142.80
Contribution Box	68.69	68.69	Beginner Big Book Step Th 630pm		25.00
Deer Park Discovery Group	40	40.00	Be Still AA Su 11am	120.84	120.84
Gay Newcomers Group		13.57	Beach Meeting\Meditation Sa 930am	40.05	40.05
IFB	75	150.00	Beginners' Step Study Sat 630pm	86.05	86.05
Unidentified Group	270	650.72	Bernal Big Book Sat 5pm	168.74	168.74
Total Fellowship	\$ 491.69	\$ 960.98	Big Book Study Su 1130am	68.38	68.38
Marin Group Contributions			Boys Night Out Tu 730pm	21.00	21.00
A Vision For You Su 730pm		40.00	Brokers Open Book Tu 130pm	141.60	141.60
Beginners & Closed Tu 7pm & 830pm	190	456.00	Castro Discussion (Show Of Shows) W 8pm		111.38
Beginners Tu 7pm		156.00	Chips Ahoy Tu 12pm	8	41.00
Beginners W 7pm		110.00	Cocoanuts Su 9am		79.00
Caledonia Sun 8pm	409.48	409.48	Cow Hollow Men's Group		124.50
Closed Women Step Study Tu 330pm		112.50	Design for Living Sat 8am	235.09	235.09
Girls Night Out W 815pm	10.65	10.65	Each Day a New Beginning F 7am		528.00
Intimate Feelings Sa 10am		95.60	Each Day A New Beginning Su 8am		234.62
Island Group Th 8pm		161.50	Each Day a New Beginning Tu 7am		220.30
Keepin' It Real Th 6pm		60.00	Easy Does It Tu 6pm		70.00
Mill Valley Discussion W 830pm	22.72	22.72	Embarcadero Group 5D 1210pm	494.92	494.92
Monday Night Stag (Tiburon) 8pm	549.03	856.81	Federal Speaker Su 12pm	210.22	210.22
Nativity Monday Night Big Book M 8pm	100	100.00	Fireside Chat Sa 9pm	180.00	180.00
Noon Tu 12pm	193.5	193.50	Fireside Chat Tu 8pm		81.28
North Marin Speaker Sun 12pm	150	150.00	Friday All Groups F 830pm		1260.00
On Awakening 7D 530am		210.00	Friendly Circle Su 830pm		254.34
Refugee Th 12pm	30	30.00	Four Forty Niners F 8pm	67.20	67.20
Reveille 7D 7pm	100	100.00	Goodlands Su 2pm	88.98	88.98
Rise N Shine Sun 10am		67.50	High Noon Friday 1215pm		181.57
Saturday Serenity Sa 8pm		65.50	High Noon Monday 1215pm	237.37	237.37
Six O'Clock Sunset Th 6pm		97.61	High Noon Thursday 1215pm	42.60	42.60
Spiritual Testost. Sun Men's Stag Su 830a		250.00	High Noon Tuesday 1215pm	126	205.83
Streetfighters Sa 9am	46.8	46.80	High Noon Wednesday 1215pm	33.9	86.21
Sunday Express Sun 6pm	100	100.00	Hilldwellers M 8pm	74.40	74.40
Sunday Friendship Sun 7pm		120.00	Hot Java F 12am	90.00	90.00
Survivors M 12pm	138	138.00	How It Works Sat 2pm		55.39
Terra Linda Group Th 830pm	100	200.00	Huntington Square W 630pm	411.51	411.51
The Barnyard Group Sa 4pm		240.54	Joys of Recovery Tu 8pm	60.00	60.00
Thurs. Night Speaker, MV	415	415.00	Keep It Simple Sat 830pm		93.32
Tuesday Chip Meeting Tu 8pm	550	550.00	Last Call Su 10pm	75.00	75.00
Tiburon Haven Sun 12pm		136.00	Light Steppers Su 7pm	120.00	120.00
Women's Big Book Tu 1030am		55.87	Living Sober with HIV W 6pm	245.96	245.96
Women on Monday M 7pm		150.27	Luke's Group W 8pm	60.00	60.00
Total Marin Group Contributions	\$ 3,105.18	\$ 5,907.85	Lush Lounge Sa 2pm	88.8	208.80
SF Group Contributions			Marina Discussion F 830pm	517.67	517.67
7am Speaker Discussion Th 7am	94.18	94.18	Meeting Place Noon F 12pm		50.40
830am Smokeless Th		64.43	Miracles Off 24th St W 730pm	19.31	19.31
A Vision for You (SF) Su 630pm	75	75.00	Mission Fellowship		259.73
AA Step Study Su 6pm	286.75	286.75	Monday Beginners M 8pm		300.00
Afro American Beginners Sat 8pm		28.35	New Highs W 130pm	70.80	70.80
			New Hope Big Book M 630pm	22.69	22.69
			New Life W 7pm		128.25

Group Contributions, continued from p. 12

Name	Feb. 2006	YTD
Newcomers Group Tu 7pm		214.50
One Liners Th 830pm		667.86
Pax West M 12pm		441.68
Pax West Th 12pm		143.89
Pax West Th 12pm		40.15
Rebound W 830pm		85.00
Rule 62 W 10pm		279.00
Saturday Easy Does It Sa 12pm		351.29
Saturday Night Regroup Sat 730pm		184.73
Serenity House	100	300.00
Serenity Seekers M 730pm	395.00	395.00
Sesame Step Tu 730pm	237.13	237.13
SFPOA Th 7pm		51.00
Sisters Circle Su 6pm	128.45	235.91
Sober & Centered F 7pm		120.95
Sober Across the Board M-Sa 830am	10	20.00
Sometimes Slowly Sa 11am		36.01
Step Talk Su 830am		30.25
Step Talk Su 830am		264.00
Straight Jackets Th 9am	15	52.47
Sunday Night Castro Speaker Disc Su 730pm	325.33	325.33
Sunrise Sunset Women's Step Th 545pm	58.80	58.80
Sunset 11'ers Su		102.85
Sunset 11'ers W		20.00
Sunset 9'ers F	46.83	82.51
Sunset 9'ers M	119.11	119.11
Sunset 9'ers Sa		131.65
Sunset 9'ers Tu	96	166.68
Sunset 9'ers W	39.5	136.09
Sunset Sobriety Th 730pm	278.00	278.00
Sunset Speaker Step Sun 730pm		80.00
Sutter Street Beginners Sat 6pm	187.00	187.00
Ten Years After Su 6pm		410.56
The Drive Thru W 1215pm	126.83	126.83
Too Early Sat 8am		117.00
Transrecovery F 630pm	9.40	9.40
Tuesday Big Book Study Tu 6pm	90.00	90.00
Walk of Shame W 8pm	120.00	120.00
Waterfront Sun 8pm	234.52	366.52
We Care Tu 12pm		124.35
Wednesday Women's Big Book W 615pm		60.00
West Portal W 915pm		103.21
Women's 10 Years Plus Th 615pm		74.09
Women's Kitchen Table Group Tu 630pm		82.75
Women's Promises F 7pm	78.85	78.85
Work In Progress Sat 7pm	57.77	57.77
YAHOO Step Sa 11am		35.00
Total SF Group Contributions	\$ 7,637.57	\$17,116.18
TOTAL	\$11,234.44	\$23,985.01

Gratitude Month Contributions 2005

Name	Amount
Marin Gratitude Month	
Tuesday Chip Meeting Tu 8pm	249.77
Total Marin Gratitude Month	\$ 249.77
SF Gratitude Month	
Fell Street F 830pm	7.00
Total SF Gratitude Month	\$ 7.00
TOTAL	\$ 256.77

Individual Contributions February 2005

Unrestricted Contributions	45.00
	5.00
	25.00
	10.00
Total Unrestricted Contributions	\$ 85.00
Honors	10.00
	114.00
	30.00
	100.00
Total Honors	\$ 254.00
Total INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	\$ 339.00

Recent Deaths

John C. (Spiritual John)

We print the names of any members who have recently died when the names have been sent to us. Unlike the Honors section, which appears elsewhere, Recent Deaths is for information only.

The Inverness Saturday Night Women's Meeting


by Gail F.

In the fall of 1988 a group of newcomers living in West Marin were told by one of the few women out here with some time in the fellowship that we should start our own meeting. There were four of us trying to stay sober by doing "365 in 365" instead of the usual "90 in 90". We were having a lot of fun and driving back and forth from Inverness Park to Bolinas and Stinson Beach. We had endless discussions and spent a lot of time puzzling about sobriety, meetings, A.A. in general, the Big Book, the Steps and our various personal problems, as we drove back and forth trying to avoid the wildlife on Highway 1. We didn't know it then but this bond we formed helped to provide us all with a solid base for our recovery. I think about those times often when a new woman comes into the meeting we started back then and wish for her what was given to us -- a feeling of connection and support that none of us had experienced before.

The meeting began in a little cottage in downtown Point Reyes Station, a cottage which at that time housed Health & Human Services. The living room we met in had an old-fashioned fireplace and we all got into the habit of bringing wood in the winter to keep ourselves warm. Eventually the meeting had to move when the house was sold and we were lucky to get the Inverness Fire House

meeting room where we are now.

It is hard to keep a small meeting going sometimes but this meeting has been strong for a long time now. Seventeen years. It's easy for me to remember because I only had a few months of sobriety when the meeting began. We started by asking all the sober women in West Marin to tell their stories. That took care of our first few months of speakers. We decided pretty early on that we should alternate speaker discussion meetings with discussion meetings. After the local women had all told their stories a couple of times over as well as their sponsors' and relatives', we branched out. I was going over the hill regularly to the Fairfax 7:00 a.m. meeting in those days so I was able to invite women from Fairfax and San Geronimo to speak at our meeting. We all made it our business to supply speakers. As a lot of sober women came to give us their experience, strength and hope we found they became regulars at our meeting and brought their friends. Now the continuing membership is at least one-half women from out of our immediate area.

The meeting still fluctuates between three and 35 or so. We meet at the Inverness Fire House from 6:00 to 7:15 p.m. every Saturday. All are welcome! 

SPEAKERS WANTED!!

**Carry the AA message to schools, professional organizations,
the medical community, drunk driving classes,
and community groups & events.**

PI/CPC

(Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community)

SPEAKER WORKSHOP

(Requirement: two years of continuous sobriety in AA)

Saturday, May 13th, 10:00 a.m.

Central Office, 1821 Sacramento St.
(Between Van Ness & Franklin)

For further information, call the Central Office: 674-1821

Character Defects? What Character Defects?


by Anonymous

I did not have any character defects! Well not as many as all the people who had wronged me. This was my thinking when I got into A.A. I knew I wasn't perfect, but I was just a victim of circumstances and I had to do the things I did to survive in this cruel world. My actions, whether they were right or wrong, were all justified in my eyes. I didn't necessarily like my behavior, but it was what I needed to do to live life the way I was living it. I was drinking every day, lying about my drinking to family (they just did not understand why I had to drink), stealing from or taking advantage of some people because I did not make enough money, and being kind and giving to others just so I could get my way with them.

I began attending A.A. meetings because I wanted to prove to my girlfriend at the time that I did not have a problem. As I listened to people in A.A. talk about their lives and behavior, I could relate what they said to my own life. I began to see that I was just like these people who called themselves alcoholics. Maybe I was an alcoholic! Maybe my behavior was in fact alcoholic behavior which had permeated every thread of my body. People in A.A. were willing to meet with each other, admit their faults, and discuss how they were changing their lives. This was very foreign and uncomfortable for me.

What a revelation it was to work the Fourth and Fifth Steps with a sponsor. I began to understand where the other alcoholics were coming from when they shared their experience, strength, and hope. I realized that I was

dishonest, a thief, a manipulator, afraid, and that all of this behavior was part of me, and on top of it I turbo-charged it with alcohol. My sponsor showed me by working the Fourth Step that my character was defective and I had no one to blame but myself. This means that I am responsible for all of my behavior and all of my actions. I can control only me. This was sure the reverse of blaming everyone else for my behavior. What a revelation it was to know that I had to take responsibility for myself! The hard part was to figure out how I was going to do that. The Fifth Step allowed me to open up and share every detail of my character defects with my sponsor. This was very difficult for me because I had never opened up 100% to any human being. Once I spilled my guts I felt as if a huge weight had been lifted from me. My sponsor shared some things about himself that made me feel that I was no different from him. I felt as if I were a new person free of my dark past.

Now, I have embarked on a lifelong journey, working daily on my character defects, having new ones pop up which I have to deal with, going to meetings every day, being of service, sharing at meetings and working with newcomers. I have learned to be honest and I don't have to steal anymore. I am content and happy and can give because I want to give from my heart, and I can love others for who they are because I have learned to love myself. And I can do it all without a drink. I now understand what a Spiritual Awakening is and that it comes as a result of doing the Twelve Steps. I can't imagine living life without the principles of A.A. Thank God for Bill and Bob! 


The Best of Bill (Continued from page 11)

others." As a spiritual practice, Bill adopts the vision of perfect humility as the willingness at all times to do the will of God and compares that to his personal inventory. In this way, he can see how he advances on that allegorical highway of humility.

In "Love, The Next Frontier: Emotional Sobriety" Bill tackles his challenge with depression and finds his absolute dependency on people and things to provide him with security and prestige. Discovering the prayer of St. Francis enabled him to break that dependency and connect to God's love through working with other alcoholics.

The final essay on anonymity describes the spiritual substance of anonymity as sacrifice. The story illus-

trates how the early experiences in A.A. history, including Bill's own public notoriety, threatened the unity and survival of the Fellowship. The Twelve Traditions, which Bill described in 1955 as setting our faces against nearly every trend in the outside world, are the reason that A.A. survives today, and Traditions Eleven and Twelve speak specifically about anonymity at the general public level. We make sacrifices at the personal and group level because we want to ensure the survival of A.A. and its ability to carry the message.

...to practice these principles in all our affairs. 

NEW in the Central Office Bookstore!

The Best of Bill -Large Print Edition \$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

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

Following is an unofficial summary of actions, information, upcoming business and service opportunities discussed at the April 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. reporting. Reviews attendance requirement for IFB representatives. Reiterates appropriateness of wording in the bylaws regarding 'acting in the best interest of the corporation.' Discussion will be open to encourage committee participation. Special Events committee funding needs will be re-assessed. Bylaws changes will be read to the members.

Central Office Manager's Report: Joe G. reporting for Maury P.. Members of the IFB are requested to take Trusted Servant Registration Forms to meetings that they

attend. Phone shifts are filled but subs are requested. There are new Grapevine items in the bookstore. Maury will be out of the office April 14 – 22, 2006.

Central Office Committee Report: Rebekah D. reporting. Committee flyer guidelines were discussed. The committee voted to allow flyers to be inserted into the Point, though a .05 cent per copy charge will be required if the flyers are not provided.

Treasurer's Monthly Report: Danna P. reporting. The net loss for February was (\$3,022), which is \$92 less than the budgeted net loss of (\$3,114). Unrestricted cash as of February 28, 2006 totaled \$51,335 and is sufficient to pay the budgeted expenses for three months. Unrestricted cash decreased by \$7,301 since January 31 primarily due to the net loss for February, \$500 funded into the Reserve for Computers, and a \$3,181 increase in inventory. Prepaid Expenses increased by \$484 due to prepaying of a portion

of an inventory purchase. Accounts Payable decreased by \$482 due to the payment of several bills.

2. Committee Participation Empowerment

a. Discussion about committee participation ensues. The question is posed - what do we need to do to empower people to sign up for committees? Many people gave feedback about what does and doesn't work for them as far as IFB service and committee expectations. Most people need more exposure to committee needs or do not have time to serve on committees.

7th Tradition and reading of the 12 Traditions: \$85.06 collected.

3. Special Events Committee

a. Monthly Report - Fran K. reporting. The prom was very successful. The committee met each week for 9 weeks before the event and did extensive outreach. Newcomers and old timers alike volunteered. Founders Day is in June. The committee meets the 4th Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm at Central Office.

b. Anonymous Prom Financial Report - Derek D. reporting. Total current assets were \$5,582. Central Office will receive its \$1,000 in seed money back and a donation of \$2,817.

c. Funding - Steve R. opens discussion on whether the IFB should waive the approval process for seed money for the Special Events Committee. Discussion ensues. No motion is made. Fran requests \$1,500 seed money for Founder's Day.

Motion: The IFB approves \$1,500 seed money for the Special Events Committee to put on Founders Day. M/S/C

For - 33, Against - 0, Abstain - 3: Motion passes.

4. IFB Flyer Policy

Discussion tabled until next meeting.

5. Bylaws Reading

Steve R. read Article V, Section 10 of the Bylaws and added the proposed sentence at the end that read, "Former reps returning for a new term after an absence of more than two years are required to attend orientation."

6. IFB Committee Reports

12th Step Committee: Victor V. reporting. There is a workshop on Saturday, May 6th at 10:00am at Central Office. The committee meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm at Central Office.

Archives Committee: Lynnore G. reporting. There are

three people on the committee and they need more help. They are cataloging their material. The committee meets the 1st Monday of the month at 6:00pm at Central Office.

Literature Review Committee: Steve N. reporting. There are currently four members and they need more support. The Central Office pamphlet is in progress. The committee volunteers to create pamphlets for other committees. The committee regularly writes articles for the Point and is looking for submissions. The committee meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm at Central Office.

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

Special Needs Committee: Pene P. reporting. They are developing flyers for agencies working with alcoholics and a flyer to raise awareness of the committee within the AA community. Attended the Oakland Special Needs Committee meeting last month to mentor them. Working with the Literature Review committee on a pamphlet. The Committee meets on the 4th Tuesday at 2pm at Central Office.

Trusted Servants Workshop Committee: Monika H. reporting. The workshop on March 11th focused on Secretary position and had 27 attendees. They would like to run another Secretary workshop later this year. The committee meets on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 5:30pm at Central Office.

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

7. IFB Standing Committee Reports

SF Teleservice: Judi C. reporting. One person showed up for orientation last month. There are still four openings. A new pamphlet for the committee is being produced by the Literature Review committee. The committee meets the 3rd Monday at 6:30pm at Central Office.

SF PI/CPC: Bruce K. reporting. The committee has many speaking engagements in the near future. There is a workshop on May 13th at 10:00am at Central Office. The Committee meets on the 2nd Monday at 7pm at Central Office.

8. Non-IFB Liaison Reports

None given.

The next IFB meeting will be held Wednesday, May 3, 2006 at the Star of the Sea Church at 180 Harrison Avenue, Sausalito at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren H., IFB Secretary

A.A. Acronym—I.S.M.

by Anonymous


When I first got sober just over eight years ago I got a sponsor right away. It was what I was told to do and it seemed to be working out pretty well for the sober alcoholics I was meeting in A.A. When we got to the Fourth Step I decided that I didn't like my current sponsor's method so I got a new one. My new sponsor's way was more to my liking and with just over a year sober I finished the Fourth Step. A few days later we did the Fifth Step together. He then told me to follow the instructions in the Big Book: "sit quietly for an hour or so and think about the journey up to this point, then commence on Steps Six and Seven."

I felt I had made great progress that I deserved a break from all this work. My sponsor and I stayed in touch on and off for a while, but mostly off. Eventually I stopped calling him altogether. Without realizing it I had made the decision to sponsor myself.

For the next few years I'd go to meetings, hear people talking about working all 12 steps and just tune them out. As far as I was concerned the fellowship and meetings were enough for me. I didn't need to work the steps and the fact that I was still sober was proof! When problems arose I'd sometimes confide in a friend or someone with more time in the program. But more and more I found that I was keeping things to myself. I believed I could solve all my problems in my head and on my own.

At three and a half years things got really difficult. I had recurring financial insecurities and my interactions with my co-workers, friends and family were always strained, sometimes intolerable. I began to think that maybe A.A. was not the answer for me. Thoughts of drinking and using again became more frequent.

After hearing his story at a meeting I asked someone I'd seen around for a long time to sponsor me. We talked on the phone a few times and began to work the steps. This time we got all the way to the Eighth Step before my life turned around enough for me to believe I didn't need the steps or a sponsor again. Finally, right around my fifth sobriety birthday I bottomed out. My difficulties seemed insurmountable and my thoughts were constantly turning to using and even suicide. I finally knew that I had to "grow or go" as I had heard people say in meetings.

I called my long-lost sponsor and said the words that changed my life: "I need to finish the steps." We met over the next few months, read the Big Book and the 12 & 12 together and did the rest of the steps. The changes in my life were slow, but steady and dramatic. "Life on life's terms" still has its ups and downs, but having a sponsor to guide you through the steps and your recovery makes all the difference in the world. Call your sponsor! 

The Point Editorial Policy

The Point publishes articles submitted by members of Alcoholics Anonymous that reflect the full diversity of experience and opinion found within our fellowship. No one viewpoint or philosophy dominates its pages, and in determining the content, we 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. 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. While we edit submissions for purposes of clarity, style, and length, we encourage all writers to express their own experience in their own unique way. Please note that submission of an article does not constitute promise of

(Continued on page 19)

Is your group information up to date in the schedule and on the website? Both Marin and SF schedules are about to be updated, so now is a good time to verify that all meeting information is accurate.

If you need to update us about anything, please download a Group Information Form from our website (<http://www.aasf.org/forms/GroupInformationForm.pdf>) or call us at the office.

Thanks for your help!

Financial Statement

February 2006 - Intercounty Fellowship of AA

	<u>Feb 06</u>	<u>Jan - Feb 06</u>		<u>Feb 06</u>	<u>Jan - Feb 06</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense			Net Ordinary Income	-2,504.06	3,647.58
Income			Other Income/Expense		
Contributions from Groups			Other Income		
Group Contributions	11,234.44	23,985.01	Interest Income	74.54	162.85
Total Contributions from Groups	11,234.44	23,985.01	Total Other Income	74.54	162.85
Contributions from Individuals			Other Expense		
Individual - Unrestricted	84.99	2,596.90	Depreciation Expense	354.36	708.72
Faithful Fiver	637.00	1,264.00	Amortization Expense	238.78	477.56
Honorary Contributions	254.00	454.15	Total Other Expense	593.14	1,186.28
Total Contributions from Individuals	975.99	4,315.05	Net Other Income	-518.60	-1,023.43
Gratitude Month			Net Income	-3,022.66	2,624.15
Gratitude Month - Groups	256.77	2,179.74			
Total Gratitude Month	256.77	2,179.74			
Sales - Bookstore	8,752.64	18,394.46			
Newsletter Subscript.	54.38	98.62			
Total Income	21,274.22	48,972.88			
Cost of Goods Sold					
Credit Card Processing Fees	148.44	286.89			
Cost of Books Sold	5,744.91	11,718.77			
Total COGS	5,893.35	12,005.66			
Gross Profit	15,380.87	36,967.22			
Expense					
Employee Expenses					
Wages & Salaries	7,458.00	15,043.50			
Employer Tax Expenses	872.41	1,978.65			
Health Benefits	788.00	1,576.00			
Workers Comp Ins.	0.00	355.08			
Total Employee Expenses	9,118.41	18,953.23			
Bank Charges	0.00	0.00			
Postage					
Bulk Mail	0.00	200.00			
Total Postage	0.00	200.00			
Rent - Office	3,833.75	7,667.50			
Rent - Other	75.00	75.00			
Filing/Fees	260.00	260.00			
Insurance	1,366.50	1,826.00			
Internet Expense	136.79	213.97			
Office Supplies	259.45	545.68			
Shipping	37.49	-2.36			
Equipment Lease	1,739.60	1,739.60			
Repair & Maintenance	188.00	451.72			
Security System	33.50	67.00			
Special Events	250.00	250.00			
Telephone	254.59	494.78			
Phone Book Listings	76.50	153.00			
Utilities	248.35	417.52			
Bad Checks	7.00	7.00			
Total Expense	17,884.93	33,319.64			

Editorial Policy (continued from page 18)

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