

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

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

The Point

September 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.

Anonymity at Work

by Kathleen C.



And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.

Tradition Twelve (The Long Form).

The chapter "Working with Others" in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous reminds us not to speak to the alcoholic from a spiritual hilltop, but to humbly share our experience, strength and hope. So I don't tell people at work I am a member of A.A. to show them how holy I am.

I started my present job at ninety days sober and in December I will have been there for twenty sober years. My sobriety has gone through many phases and so has the way I practice my program at work. At first, I didn't tell my boss I was a sober alcoholic. I wasn't that sure of myself and I didn't know how he would react. Later, I shared with him that I was sober in A.A. and he was happy for me for the difference A.A. had made in my life. I didn't tell my fellow employees, none of whom, as far as I knew, were in the Program. At office parties and lunches it wasn't that hard not to drink, since there were other people who didn't drink for religious or health reasons. I just passed and it was no big deal and I didn't have to explain.

Then I saw a member of the Computer Tech Department at a noon meeting. I had always liked this guy, and seeing him at a meeting made me like him even more. We used to chat about our drinking careers and our sober lives if there was nobody else around. He taught me some things about workplace anonymity. By this time, I was telling a few people that I was in A.A. and I would mention as I headed out the door that I was going to a meeting. He shook his head in disapproval. "What if somebody sees another person with you at noon on a Tuesday and they know you go to a Tuesday noon meeting? Doesn't that break

(Continued on page 6)

September 2006....

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
	4 FIRST MON Spirit of SF Committee, Central Office, 7:30 pm Labor Day Central Office Closed	5	6 FIRST WED Intercounty Fellowship Board Orientation 6 pm, Meeting 7 pm, 1187 Franklin St./ Geary, First Unitarian Church, S.F. (Feb., May, Aug., & Nov in Sausalito at 180 Harrison Ave., Sausalito, CA; Star of the Sea Church)	7	8	9 Trusted Servants Workshop - Focus on Literature 10am, Central Office
10	11 SECOND MON SF Public Information Committee Central Office, 7 pm	12 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	13 SECOND WED 12th Step Workshop Central Office, 6:30 pm Marin Bridging the Gap 1411 Lincoln Ave., San Rafael 8 pm	14 SECOND THU Website Committee Central Office, 6 pm	15	16 Marin County Unity Day Corte Madera Rec Center 498 Tamalpais Dr. Corte Madera 2 PM to 10 PM
17 THIRD SUN Archives Committee, Central Office, 2 pm Business Meeting followed by Work Day	18 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	19 THIRD TUE San Mateo General Service St. Andrews Church 15th & El Camino Real San Mateo, 7:30 pm	20 THIRD WED Literature Review Committee Central Office, 6:30 pm	21	22	23 FOURTH SAT General Service CNCA Meeting 320 N. McDowell Petaluma DCMCs: 10 am Business Meeting: 12:30 pm
24 FOURTH SUN Living Sober Convention Committee, 1668 Bush, SF 5:30 pm	25	26 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	27 FOURTH WED Trusted Servants Workshop Committee Central Office, 5:30 pm	28 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 pm	29	

From the Editor...

One of the most difficult aspects of recovery, in my opinion, is practicing the spiritual principles outlined in the Twelve Steps while at work. The theme of our September issue is Work, and what it means to be a "worker among workers", ready and able to contribute to society in a meaningful way.

We've several useful articles detailing what this looks like for some of us in the fellowship. We hope you find them as interesting as we do.

And, once again, I'd like to ask for written contributions from our readers. We'll be publishing a list of themes for upcoming editions soon that should make it easier to plan what you would like to write. We accept articles of all lengths under 900 words. Like a good tailor, we'll cut them to fit if we have to.

Don't forget about Dear Alky and The Bulletin Board. These are venues for our readers' questions, thoughts, ideas and concerns. We'd love to hear from you. Express yourself! ↑

The Editor

Joke of the Month

THE BUFFALO THEORY

"Well you see, it's like this...A herd of buffalo can only move as fast as the slowest buffalo. And when the herd is hunted, it is the slowest and weakest ones at the back that are killed first. This natural selection is good for the herd as a whole, because the general speed and health of the whole group keeps improving by the regular killing of the weakest members.



In much the same way, the human brain can only operate as fast as the slowest brain cells. Now, as we know, excessive intake of alcohol kills brain cells. But naturally, it attacks the slowest and weakest brain cells first. In this way, regular consumption of beer eliminates the weaker brain cells, making the brain a faster and more efficient machine. And that, my friend, is why you always feel smarter after a few beers." ↑

(Reprinted from an unknown source.)

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., and Victor V.

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:

Tue 7:00am Ingleside
 Tue 8:15pm Hayes Valley
 Fourth Sun 4:00pm Hayes Valley

TUESDAY MORNING REFLECTIONS, Church, 1345 Ocean Ave./ Granada (BK)
 LESBIANS LIVING SOBER S.F. Alano Club, 1748 Market St./ Octavia (BK, WO, DI)
 FROM SURVIVAL TO RECOVERY SF Alano Club, 1748 Market St./ Octavia (BK, WO, DI)

Meeting Changes:

Sun 2:00pm Castro
 Sun 8:00pm Novato
 Tue 8:30pm Castro
 2nd Wed 7:00 pm San Rafael

GOODLANDS Rec. Center, 100 Collingwood/ 18th St. (was 150 Eureka St.)
 NORTH BAY TRUDGERS DISCUSSION 1907 Novato Blvd (was 1905 Novato Blvd., Senior Access)
 PROGRESS NOT PERFECTION Castro Country Club, 4058 18th St. (was 150 Eureka St.)
 MARIN BRIDGING THE GAP 1411 Lincoln Ave., Lincoln Hill Community Church, back lot, upstairs (was 8:00pm)
 NORTH BAY TRUDGERS BOOK STUDY 1907 Novato Blvd (was 1905 Novato Blvd., Senior Access)
 PRIMARY PURPOSE 1461 S. Novato Blvd (add Closed)
 AS BILL SEES IT 501 Castro/ 18th St, Upstairs (was Castro Country Club, 4058 18th St.)
 AS BILL SEES IT 45 Castro/ Duboce, N. Tower, Rm. B-2/3 (was Castro Country Club, 4058 18th St.)
 STEP SISTERS (ring bell after 8:15pm for entry, meeting ends at 9:30pm)
 Y.A.H.O.O. STEP 501 Castro St./ 18th St. (was 150 Eureka St.)
 BARNYARD 1907 Novato Blvd (was 1905 Novato Blvd., Senior Access)
 BEGINNERS' STEP STUDY Castro Country Club, 4058 18th St. (was 150 Eureka St.)
 KEEP IT SIMPLE Davies Med. Center, 45 Castro/ Duboce, N. Tower, Rm. B-2/3 (was 150 Eureka St.)

Reported Missing:

Sat 7:00pm Duboce Park BROTHERS IN RECOVERY 940 Haight St./ Divisadero

Recently Registered Trusted Servants July 2006

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

San Francisco

Any Lengths Sat. 9:30am; Beginners' Step Study Sat. 6:30pm; Bernal New Day Fri. 7:30am; Blue Book Special Sun. 11am; Cocoanuts Sun. 9am; Come 'n' Get It! Fri. 6:30pm; Common Welfare Thu. 8pm; Courtside Tue. 12:15pm; Creative Alcoholics Mon. 6pm; Each Day a New Beginning Mon. 7am; Experience, Strength & Hope Wed. 7:15pm; Fell Street Step Sun. 8pm; Fireside Chat Sat. 9pm; From Survival to Recovery 4th Sun. 4pm; Happy Destiny Sat. 6:30pm; High Noon Saturday Sat. 12:15pm; High Noon Tuesday Tue. 12:15pm; Meeting Place Noon Wed. 12pm; Monday Beginners Mon. 8pm; Monday Monday Mon. 12:15pm; Monday Noon Daily Reflections Mon. 12pm; New Friday Big Book Fri. 12pm; New Life Wed. 7pm; Noon Smokeless Thu. 12pm; Pax West Mon. 12pm; Saturday Afternoon Meditation Sat. 5pm; Saturday Easy Does It Sat. 12pm; Saturday Matinee Sat. 2pm; Sinbar Sun. 8pm; Spiritual Workshop Mon. 7pm; Sunset Speaker Step Sun. 7:30pm; Ten Years After Sun. 6pm; Trans Recovery Fri. 6:30pm; Tuesday's Daily Reflections Tue. 7am

Marin

Girls Night Out Wed. 8:15pm; Quitting Time Wed. 5:30pm; Pathfinder's Tue. 12pm; Primary Purpose Wed. 8:30pm; Rise N Shine Sun. 10am

Recent Deaths

Morning After: Bob C. 32 years

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. This one-time listing is not dependent upon a contribution in the name of the deceased.

CONTRIBUTIONS

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

ONGOING MEMORIALS

Dina R., Lita G.,
Bob C. & Donald W.

ANNIVERSARIES

Barbara M-R 12 years
Ralph P. 19 years
Matt S. 24 years

Coming Up!

FRIDAY ALL GROUPS

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

DATE	HOST GROUP	SPEAKER	FROM
09/01	How It Works	Matt S.	Join The Tribe
09/08	The Embarcadero	Carole M.	Morton Group
09/15	Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag	Bridget L.	Star of the Sea
09/22	Spirit of SF	Mike N.	Serenity House
09/29	Richmond Big Book	Karen C.	A is for Alcohol

BIRTHDAY MEETING

1748 Market St.
San Francisco Alano Club
Saturday, 8 pm

DATE	SPEAKER
09/02	Paul L.
09/09	Kurt C.
09/16	Dolores V.
09/23	Arthur M.
09/30	TBA

TUESDAY DOWNTOWN

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

DATE	SPEAKER
09/05	Vickie
09/12	Pete
09/19	Billie
09/26	Georgia

BRISBANE BREAKFAST BUNCH

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

DATE	SPEAKER	FROM
09/03	Gerri P.	Brown Baggers, WBAC
09/10	Michael G.	Embarcadero Group
09/17	Donna H.	Embarcadero Group
09/24	Esperanza	Brisbane Breakfast Bunch



Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous
serving San Francisco and Marin Counties

The Trusted Servants Workshop Committee presents a **TRUSTED SERVANTS WORKSHOP**

Spotlight on: Literature Person

What kinds of books and pamphlets should I get for my group?
Are the pamphlets really free? What does "conference-approved" mean?
These and many more questions will be answered!

Where: AA Central Office 1821 Sacramento St.

When: Saturday, September 9, 2006 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

It's free! Refreshments will be provided!

For details call Patty M. at 415-923-9883 or Monika H. at 415-533-9341

Working It While Working It

by Li L.

Being a member of Alcoholics Anonymous while working professionally in the recovery field presents challenges and obstacles both unique and mundane. Sort of like a criminal lawyer defending a criminal lawyer for crimes against the Bar!

It is the dream of many when first sober to take up the burdens and joys of professional counseling in hopes of finding meaning in our lives and helping others find peace in theirs. There's also the side benefit of being paid for doing something you love.

I know it was a dream of mine. But then I thought, "What do I possibly have to offer? I'm barely (three, six, nine months, whatever) sober! What if I relapse? What kind of example would that be for others? You can't give away what you don't have."

So I decided to wait and see if I could really do it. I told myself that, if in three years, I am still sober; I will take the steps to become a professional counselor.

Oddly enough (by the grace of God and the Twelve Steps and definitely NOT professional treatment organizations, which I never accessed) I was able to stay sober. At about my three year anniversary, a local community college started offering certification in Drug and Alcohol Studies. So I enrolled. After 25 years

I was back in school – at the ripe age of 44. And I loved it.

The studies revealed a whole new dimension to recovery and enabled me to share what I had learned through the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. The professional treatment field is primarily psychological, whereas A.A. is primarily spiritual; blending the two creates a new flavor and may lead to insights not found through either one of the approaches alone. This is the great value of having active members of A.A. in the professional treatment field. We bring an uncommon aspect that no amount of academic training can instill.

Granted, there were some very rough spots in my budding new career. Once, on the very first night of a class, the instructor started his lecture by belittling and ridiculing Alcoholics Anonymous! There was no way I or some of the other students were going to sit there and take that without speaking up. When I made my case to the Drug and Alcohol Program Coordinator, I was allowed to complete this class by writing an essay and this instructor was promptly sent back to wherever he came from, never to be seen again! I was grateful to be there in that class to counter this instructor's prejudiced opinions (he had never been to an A.A. meeting) and I was grateful for having the

(Continued on page 11)

Anonymity at Work (Continued from page 1)

the anonymity of the person with you?" Rats! I never thought of that. By breaking my own anonymity, I could also break someone else's. Oops!

Of course, if you tell a secret to a friend you have to keep in mind that your friend has a friend and your friend's friend has a friend and pretty soon your secret is all over the office. I found this out when I received a referral from the Personnel Director, who had heard through the grapevine (pun intended) that I was in A.A. He referred to me the office drunk. Would I take him to a meeting? This poor man admitted freely that he was an alcoholic and that he needed A.A. I must have taken him to dozens of meetings over several years. He would get a few days or weeks sober and then go back out again. He was eventually fired and died drunk. He was my first and last referral from the Personnel Director.

Breaking my anonymity turned out well with a new employee in my department. I was asking about his

plans over the Fourth of July weekend. He looked pained and mumbled almost under his breath that he was going to "a conference for lesbians and gay men in recovery." "Oh," I grinned, "You're going to Living Sober!" I can still see the dawning of recognition and relief on his face. We shared how long we had each been sober and from that day forward we had many mini-meetings in person and by e-mail. He lives outside the United States today, almost ten years later, and we still e-mail often.

Somewhere in the Big Book there is a story whose narrator muses about the conflict between wanting to stay safe and not endanger his reputation and wanting to shout from the rooftops what A. A. has done for him. I need to remember that anonymity is not about secrecy, but about humility. If I am proud of myself for being a member of A.A., then I should probably keep quiet about it, but if I can help somebody get sober, without speaking from a spiritual hilltop, then I should humbly and gratefully share my experience, strength and hope. ↑

Dear Alky

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

Dear Alky,

I am confused by this idea that God is my “new employer” (A.A. Big Book, page 63). I have a regular job and I have a real live boss. How is my Higher Power supposed to be my “employer”? It’s not like I’m independently wealthy and can quit my job and go around doing nothing other than “performing His work well.” I understand the importance of doing Twelfth Step work to stay sober and carry the message—but, really, isn’t that expression just an example of Bill W.’s overblown writing style?

--Gainfully employed alcoholic



*How is my
Higher Power
supposed to be
my employer”?*

Dear G.E.A.,

Your question is directed to a core spiritual principle in the program — seeking out God’s will for us. The concept appears in the Big Book in the discussion of the Third Step, and it follows a description of the alcoholic as “an extreme example of self-will run riot.”

As for Alky, the idea of God or Higher Power as “employer” is a pretty meaningful metaphor. In my drinking days, I thought I was “the Boss”—the person with the authority to make all decisions in my life. Toward the end, I became more and more frustrated with my inability to force people, places and things to cooperate with my plans. After getting sober and doing the first two steps, I recognized that I needed some form of guidance in decision-making beyond my own mind. I didn’t have a huge problem with the concept of a Higher Power, nor did I have any particular image of “God.” Exhausted with my own efforts, I was willing to try “turning it over” as suggested by the people I met in A.A. The first big shift for me in sobriety

was relinquishing my idea that I was “the Boss of me.”

Regarding employers, Alky has gotten into just as much trouble with overdependence on others as with overdependence on self. When drinking, I always underperformed and hid. I have a history of finding jobs where I could hide behind a boss, allowing that person to be a symbolic parent figure, part of whose job is to take care of me. That path has proven highly unsatisfying in sobriety—the only time I was ever fired was at seven and a half years of sobriety. I had abdicated my responsibility to find and do the right work for me and had expected to be taken care of at my job, all the while resenting having to do it.

Alky has since become self-employed, something that never could have worked when I was an active alcoholic. This is because I recognize that although I am responsible for doing my work, I am still not the “Boss.” God is my employer in the

sense that, if I expect to have any peace of mind or success—material or otherwise—I have to seek and accept guidance from a source greater than myself. Although technically I earn my income performing particular work, my real rewards come from trying to serve others in whatever way the Boss sees fit. All I have to do is ask, and my “employer” will almost always direct me to where I can be of maximum service. When I forget what my real “job” is in this lifetime; when I place the “cart” of material success ahead of the “horse” of spiritual progress—I get the predictable result of being “pulled backward into disillusionment.”

So, dear reader, Alky congratulates you on your gainful employment. Here is hoping that, at the workplace and everywhere you go, you are of loving service both to your employer and to your “Boss.” ↑

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



Bulletin Board

A.A. Grapevine, the international monthly journal of Alcoholics Anonymous, also known as “Our Meeting in Print,” launches AudioGrapevine, AA Grapevine Magazine in audioformat.

As one of A.A.’s founders, Bill W., expressed it in 1946, “The Grapevine will be the voice of the Alcoholics Anonymous movement . . . The Grapevine will try to carry the A.A. message to alcoholics and practice in all its affairs.” In keeping with A.A.-Grapevine’s mission to carry the A.A. message, A.A.-Grapevine inaugurates Audio Grapevine, a

truly portable “meeting in print” that members can listen to on the road, in the gym or when they cannot get to a meeting. It’s also helpful to A.A.s who either have difficulty reading or who don’t have much time for reading.

Audio-Grapevine offers all the stories from two months of the A.A. Grapevine magazine – stories of personal recovery, spiritual growth, and hope, plus PO Box 1980, the Editor’s note, and jokes. It’s all available at www.aagrapevine.org to download and listen to anytime, anywhere. It all began with one alcoholic talking to another. It continues with Audio Grapevine at www.aagrapevine.org.

The above press release was recently sent to us by the editor of the A.A. Grapevine. ↑

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

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

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

INTERGROUP OFFICERS:

CHAIR

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TREASURER

Danna P.

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Victor V. 415.726.0518

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Victor V. 415.726.0518

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Brian H. 415.724-5956

SPECIAL NEEDS COMMITTEE

Pene P. 415.200.6261

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SF TELESERVICE COMMITTEE

Judi C./Scott B. sfteleservice@aasf.org

SF PI/CPC COMMITTEE

Jill H. 415.647.3553

Service Bulletin

The Point Committee

by Anonymous

In Alcoholics Anonymous, there are many opportunities for service. I learned early on that service is not only strongly suggested, it is a requirement for continuous sobriety. After the obsession for alcohol had been lifted and the “pink cloud” went away, I had a great need to do something to keep my sobriety — to give it away through service.

The first year of getting, and staying, sober consisted of holding service positions such as greeter, literature person, and reading the standard portions of the Big Book, Steps, and Traditions at meetings. Being one who becomes bored easily and has the attitude of “been there, done that” after awhile, I looked for other service positions. That’s when I found *The Point*.


I heard about *The Point* when a member from the committee made an announcement that there were service positions available. Being involved in writing and graphic design, I was interested. I went to my first committee meeting in 2002 and have been involved ever since.

The Point is a publication for the members of A.A. in San Francisco and Marin counties. The primary purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous is to carry the message to the suffering alcoholic. *The Point* provides me an forum to share my experience, strength and hope, and carry the message in the form of events, announcements, bulletin board posts, questions to “Alky” and alcohol-related articles.

The Point committee has been an extremely good experience in dealing with fellow alcoholics in an adult manner—most of the time. As in any committee or group, there are many different personalities, attitudes and outlooks on how things should be done.

I have always held the position of secretary on *The Point* Committee. I’ve taken meeting minutes for a long time and really enjoy it. It appeases my controlling defect and also helps me focus and listen at our meetings. We have a lot of things to schedule, articles to be assigned and follow-up on, administrative and editorial notes to record, etc.—all of this to make sure that we do “carry the message”.

During my tenure on this committee, I’ve seen many members come and go. As folks get their lives back and obtain other commitments, they have to prioritize and, sometimes, move on. There have been some great writers, editors, and layout people. Conversely, there have also been some folks that I honestly didn’t miss. Whatever the reason for coming and going, I have learned a lot about working with others, having patience, and, ironically, practicing “restraint of pen and tongue” in this literary environment. I have written many articles for *The Point* and it has been extremely therapeutic. I enjoy writing and this is the best resource for in my local A.A. world.

I don’t know how much longer I will remain on *The Point* Committee, but that is not really up to me. Just for today, I am a member of *The Point* Committee and I know that my Higher Power will let me know when it’s my turn to move on. I may struggle when that time comes, because I like to have my nose, and opinions, in most things. 

Big Book Study: Chapter Eight—“*To Wives*”— by Morgan L.

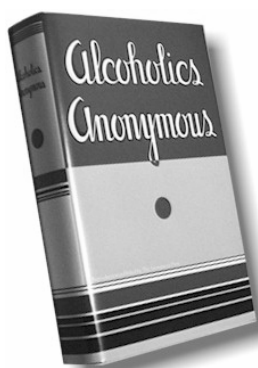
This weekend I went to the East Bay to celebrate my father's 58th birthday. There was nothing he wanted to do, so we rented a movie and ate lunch on TV tables in the living room. Halfway through the movie he fell asleep and began snoring so loudly my mother and I could not hear the movie. The entire living room smelled like a brewery. Too embarrassed to say anything, I left him a card that read, “Dear Dad, I hope this year brings you hope and joy. It is never too late to start something new.” The pain I feel at watching my father slowly kill himself is unbearable. Being an alcoholic myself, I can only imagine the pain, fear, resentment and isolation he must feel after 30 years of drinking.

Chapter Eight strikes a chord with me because it accurately describes characteristics and actions of the alcoholic, similar to my Dad's 58th “birthday party.” Until Chapter Eight, most of the Big Book describes the feelings and emotions of the alcoholic. This chapter describes how those emotions and actions affect the rest of the family. Despite the reading's sexist prose, this chapter eloquently describes many of the events my family experienced with an alcoholic father.

After giving examples of how the alcoholic's addiction affects the family, the book outlines four types of alcoholics. The types run along a continuum beginning with heavy drinkers unwilling to admit they have a problem, to violent, apparently insane individuals who have been institutionalized.

At the time the Big Book was written, it appeared that the majority of alcoholics were men. The majority of alcoholics then seeking assistance from Alcoholics Anonymous were male. Today it is clear that alcoholism affects men and women equally. Therefore, in order to get the most from this chapter it may be prudent to generalize the characteristics listed in this chapter to both men and women; brothers and sisters; husbands and wives.

After describing the four types of alcoholics, the chapter gives advice on dealing with the alcoholic. Advice from this chapter includes: never be angry with the alcoholic; treat the alcoholic as a sick person; never tell an




Chapter Eight strikes a chord with me because it accurately describes characteristics and actions of the alcoholic,

alcoholic what to do about his drinking; be determined not to let the alcoholic spoil your personal relations with friends and family; don't set your heart on reforming the alcoholic; be patient, kind, and loving; explain to others that the alcoholic is a sick man; and after a bender, gently bring up the subject of Alcoholics Anonymous. As suggested with the rest of the program, it was helpful for me to take what I could from these suggestions and leave the rest. I found some portions of this chapter too idyllic and Pollyannaish. Other suggestions I still use today.

At this point, I am not sure any of the advice in Chapter Eight will help my Dad back into recovery, but at the very least it helps keep my family's sanity. Keeping with the idea that the rest of the family must continue their lives, my mother is involved in the church, knitting circles, school and gardening. While it may appear that she has given up on my father, I think rather she has committed to living her own life. There have been too many times my father has sworn off the drink, promised to attend meetings and been drunk several hours later.

As far as discussing A.A. with my father, I talk about my own recovery openly and without shame or apology. My father's alcoholism, however, is absolutely taboo and never discussed but I never hesitate to discuss my own experience and perhaps plant a seed. I cannot help but hope that seeing his daughter sober may one day inspire him to try again. Before I was sober I was very angry at my Dad and openly drank and did drugs to passive-aggressively show him how his drinking hurt me. These days I do try and treat him as I would a sick man, despite my feelings of resentment and fear.

Chapter Eight attempts to put a human face to the inhuman, insensitive actions of the active alcoholic. For families affected by alcoholism this can be helpful in understanding the nature of the disease. It offers advice on ways to deal with the alcoholic, including letting go and letting God. While the chapter's sexism can be off-putting and dates the reading, its lessons can be broadened to the general population and may offer some solace and hope to those affected by alcoholism. 



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.	Patti W.
Caroline A.	Paul W.
Carolyn S.	Peg L.
Casey L.	Peggy M.
David H.	Pene P.
David P.	Peter F.
Elizabeth S.	Ralph P.
Frances L.	Randall S.
Giles H.	Rebekah D.
Greg W.	Regan C.
Herman B.	Robert K.
Jane K.	Sheila H.
Janet B.	Stephen N.
Jeanne C.	Steve A.
Jim H.	Steve R.
Karen K.	Steven S.
Lauren H.	Tim M.
Lisa M.	Tony J.
Matt E.	Dennis & Lucy O.



Building Business Relationships in Sobriety

by Victor V.

My scrolling screensaver at work reads "Build relationships based on honesty and service." What a concept! My boss told me three years ago that I would not be able to succeed in the business market unless I stretched the truth a little, cheated a little, took advantage of clients when I could, and bullshitted people. I was told that when I was in a social setting with clients, such as a lunch engagement or dinner, and people were drinking, they would feel uncomfortable if I was not drinking with them. This made me a bit uncomfortable. I had one year of sobriety under my belt at this point and I struggled with what my employer was telling me and what I had learned in A.A. If the tools and principles, which I had learned in A.A., to practice on a daily basis in all of my affairs, kept me sober, honest, humble, happy, joyous and free, why wouldn't these same principles affect my business relationships in the same manner?

I decided to prove my boss's theory wrong. I began to interact with my clients by being honest with them and providing the best service I could. I did not hide anything from my associates and my business practice was an open book. I treated everyone the same, with kindness, love, respect and truth. In the first year of working with others in the business world, my department did more business volume than any other department. My boss had to "eat crow." He had built his relationships based on principles not supported by A.A. That's all he knew. Now he knows different. He has a different kind of respect for me now than he used to. This was made possible for me by working the program of A.A.

Recently I played in a golf tournament sponsored by painters and glaziers. We invited clients with whom we do business. There were a lot of people drinking. I was asked numerous times why I wasn't drinking and replied that I had to stop drinking because I liked to drink all of the time. It's interesting how most people don't ask any more questions at that point. I don't feel the urge to drink even when others around me are drinking. It's amazing how much strength can come from living in the solution of A.A.

I was told to stay away from slippery places when I was new in the program and I did just that. A.A. has taught me to not pick up a drink on a daily basis. That's all I ever expected from the program. The icing on the cake is that I not only don't have to drink, but the quality of my life today is better than it ever has been in the 47 years I have been alive. What else is exciting is that life continues to get better just as the Ninth Step Promises say as long as I stay in the solution. The solution is action! The action which leads to the solution is, don't pick up a drink, go to meetings, get a sponsor, work the steps, have service commitments, work with newcomers and practice love, patience, tolerance, understanding, honesty, open mindedness, forgiveness and kindness to the best of my ability, always striving to do better. If I stick to this program everything just seems to fall in place as I continue trudging the road of happy destiny. ↑

Literature Review *Living Sober*

by Karin K.



Learning to live clean and sober in the “real world” can present many challenges to newly recovering alcoholics. Our lives had become so focused on drinking, that we forgot what it was like to behave in the world without the filter of alcohol. The Big Book outlines the tools we need to work the program of A.A. and contains stories we can identify with as we sort through our own experiences. However many of us need some extra guidance and practical suggestions to deal with life without drinking – a.k.a. Living Sober.

Published in 1975 and subtitled “Some methods A.A. members have used for not drinking”, Living Sober has 31 short chapters devoted to answering questions about changing old routines. Suggestions in the book range from seeking professional help, to remembering to be kind to ourselves. The book is written with the same straightforward suggestions and humorous anecdotes we’ve experienced in other A.A. literature.

The chapter entitled “Being Wary of Drinking Situations” gives some practical advice for dealing with the anxiety of attending social occasions in which alcohol will be available and others will most likely be drinking. For instance, if possible, take a sober friend, or, at least someone who is aware of your situation with you to provide support; make sure you eat before you

go, especially if it will be a while before food is served; and plan to leave early to avoid the need to endure a long evening of drinking. The chapter reminds us that most people will not have the least interest in whether we are drinking or not, and if we are asked, we can have some canned responses. Lastly, it points out the importance of sharing our new sobriety as soon as possible with friends and acquaintances as stating this out loud will strengthen our efforts to stay sober.

Each chapter unfolds similar suggestions and advice for maintaining our sobriety. This is a very good book for sponsors/sponsees to use as a supplement to the Big Book because it provides “helpful hints” for daily living. Several A.A. meetings in San Francisco use the Living Sober publication as the focus of the meeting. The one I attend is the 24-Hour plan on Monday morning. Each time we read a chapter, a phrase or sentence strikes just the right chord for me, and I can relate it to my own journey in sobriety.

Keep a copy of Living Sober on the nightstand, take it with you when traveling, lend it to a newly sober friend or acquaintance (or better yet, buy them their own copy!) I’ve even heard that some individuals have read it prior to coming into A.A. It’s a great book to have in you’re A.A. library. 📖

(Continued from page 6)

wisdom to know the difference (which battle to fight). Then came the real world test of actually working with alcoholics and drug addicts on a professional basis. During my internship I was paired with an experienced clinician who promptly went on vacation and left me to facilitate a group of dual diagnosis (mental health and substance abuse issues) clients... By myself! For four weeks! This definitely was NOT A.A. and not something I had any experience in. What I did have, though, I learned in A.A. and that was the ability to walk through the fear, to remain in the moment and to find a determination to help, rather than harm, others.

And what a strange, strange trip it’s been.

My career so far (five+ years) has spanned several treatment organizations from non-profits to \$20,000 a month spin-dries and a governmental agency. I’ve been blessed to work with every variety of crackpots,

criminals and fallen women! I’ve been administrator to counselor to case manager to criminal justice officer and I was recently offered (and accepted) a management position. Whew! What a ride!

I truly don’t believe this job is for everyone. There are parts of the professional recovery field that contradict the spiritual principles we practice in A.A. There are a lot of normies in the field who truly don’t have a clue and then there all those who confuse treatment with recovery (and that, my friends, is a whole article in itself).

But the joys and rewards are immense. I have formed so many enduring relationships with clients and co-workers. I have been blessed with the ability to benefit others on a daily basis and I have been given the gift of a livelihood I love. In truth, I am an A.A. mole hiding out underground, directing people to find in our fellowship the happiness I have found. 📖

AA Group Contributions - May 2006

Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous - San Francisco and Marin Counties

Name	June 2006	YTD	Name	June 2006	YTD
Fellowship			Nativity Monday Night Big Book M 8pm		200.00
Brisbane Breakfast Bunch	20.00	154.00	Newcomers Step M 730pm	117.60	117.60
Contribution Box	89.97	310.04	Noon Tu 12pm		193.50
Deer Park Discovery Group		40.00	Noon Hope F 12pm		125.00
Gay Newcomers Group		19.71	North Marin Speaker Sun 12pm		150.00
IFB	82.17	475.13	On Awakening 7D 530am		210.00
Marin Teleservice	1,347.87	1,347.87	Primary Purpose W 830pm		300.00
Men's Forum Tu		1,000.00	Refugee Th 12pm		30.00
SEC Anonymous Prom		117.00	Reveille 7D 7pm	100.00	200.00
The Chosen Ones		40.00	Rise N Shine Sun 10am		231.94
Unidentified Group	750.00	2,237.97	Saturday Serenity Sa 8pm		65.50
Total Fellowship	\$ 2,290.01	\$ 5,741.72	Sisters In Sobriety Th 730pm (M)	150.00	150.00
Marin Group Contributions			Six O'Clock Sunset Th 6pm		147.17
12 & 12 Study Sa 815am		74.07	Spiritual Testost. Sun Men's Stag Su 830a		250.00
7am Grab Bag M 7am	40.00	40.00	Sober & Serene F 7pm		250.00
A Vision for You (Fairfax) Su 730pm		50.00	Steps to Freedom M 730pm		324.31
Attitude Adjustment 7D 7am	1149.65	1,149.65	Steps To The Solution W 715pm	30.00	70.00
Awakenings		186.00	Streetfighters Sa 9am		46.80
Awareness/Acceptance M 1030am		160.00	Sunday Express Sun 6pm		100.00
Beginners & Closed Tu 7pm & 830pm		957.50	Sunday Friendship Sun 7pm		120.00
Beginners Tu 7pm		156.00	Survivors M 12pm		138.00
Beginners W 7pm		472.98	T.G.I.F. F 6pm	182.12	326.06
Blackie's Pasture Sa 830pm	127.08	127.08	T. G. I. Tuesday 6pm	94.56	94.56
Bounce Back M 6pm		120.00	Terra Linda Group Th 830pm		368.89
Caledonia Sun 8pm		530.56	The Barnyard Group Sa 4pm		370.54
Closed Women Step Study Tu 330pm	137.50	250.00	The Fearless Searchers F 8pm		70.52
Creekside New Growth Sun 7pm		94.00	There is a Solution Tu 6pm	270.49	270.49
Crossroads Sun 12pm		1,075.00	Thurs. Night Speaker, MV		796.50
Downtown Mill Valley F 830pm	168.40	168.40	Tuesday Chip Meeting Tu 8pm		550.00
Experience, Strength & Hope(Marin) Sa 6pm		75.00	Tiburon Haven Sun 12pm	211.13	715.11
Fairfax Friday Night F 830pm		100.00	We, Us and Ours M 650pm		189.50
Freedom Finders F 830pm		830.00	Wednesday Noon W 12pm		383.00
Girls Night Out W 815pm		10.65	What's It All About F 12pm		64.50
Greenfield Newcomers Sun 7pm		152.00	Women's Big Book Tu 1030am		194.17
Gratitude M 2pm		20.00	Women on Monday M 7pm		211.84
Happy Hour (Marin) Th 6pm		75.00	Working Dogs W 1205pm	550.00	550.00
Happy, Joyous & Free 5D 12pm		200.00	Total Marin Group Contributions	\$4,129.69	\$19,989.22
Hillside Candlelight F 830pm		100.00	SF Group Contributions		
Intimate Feelings Sa 10am		255.79	515pm Smokeless F		90.00
Inverness Sunday Serenity Su 10am	100.00	100.00	6am Marina Dock Sa		60.00
Island Group Th 8pm		161.50	7am Speaker Discussion Th 7am		94.18
Just Can't Wait 'til 8 M 630pm	126.50	126.50	830am Smokeless Th		64.43
Living in the Solution F 6pm	492.66	492.66	A is for Alcohol Tu 6pm	136.47	136.47
Marin City Groups 5D 630pm		434.50	A Vision for You (SF) Su 630pm		115.00
Mill Valley 7D 7am		1,181.43	AA Step Study Su 6pm		286.75
Mill Valley Discussion W 830pm		22.72	Afro American Beginners Sat 8pm		28.35
Monday Blues M 630pm		272.50	Afro American F 8pm		89.17
Monday Night Stag (Tiburon) 8pm	82.00	938.81	All Together Now Th 8pm	60.28	463.11
Monday Night Women's M 8pm		103.42	Amazing Grace M 7pm		50.00
More Will Be Revealed F 12pm		30.00	Any Lengths Sat 930am	112.20	652.80

Name	June 2006	YTD	Name	June 2006	YTD
Artists & Writers F 630pm	180.00	180.00	Hot Java F 12am		90.00
As Bill CCs It Sun 8am		80.55	How It Works Sat 2pm	48.94	104.33
As Bill Sees It Th 830pm		337.24	Huntington Square W 630pm		528.07
Beginner Big Book Step Th 630pm		25.00	Ingleside Beginners Su 5pm		22.85
Be Still AA Su 11am		120.84	Joys of Recovery Tu 8pm		60.00
Beach Meeting\ Meditation Sa 930am		92.05	Just Alkies F 7pm		42.00
Beginners' Step Study Sat 630pm		86.05	Keep Coming Back Sa 11am	470.54	1,376.99
Bernal Big Book Sat 5pm	249.32	519.03	Keep It Simple Sat 830pm		93.32
Big Book Basics F 8pm		346.05	Last Call Su 10pm	68.40	183.40
Big Book Study Su 1130am		218.66	Light Steppers Su 7pm		170.00
Boys Night Out Tu 730pm		21.00	Like A Prayer Su 4pm		74.69
Brokers Open Book Tu 130pm		141.60	Living Sober W 8pm	208.80	208.80
Castro Discussion (Show Of Shows) W 8pm		111.38	Living Sober with HIV W 6pm		287.96
Chips Ahoy Tu 12pm		88.00	Luke's Group W 8pm		60.00
Cocanuts Su 9am		79.00	Lush Lounge Sa 2pm		208.80
Common Welfare Th 8pm	32.20	32.20	Marina Discussion F 830pm		517.67
Courtside Tu 1215pm	234.60	234.60	Meeting Place Noon F 12pm	93.00	143.40
Cow Hollow Men's Group		124.50	Mid-Morning Support Su 1030am	154.06	347.13
Creative Alcoholics M 6pm		111.11	Midnight Meditation Sat 12am		125.00
Design for Living Sat 8am		235.09	Miracles Off 24th St W 730pm		69.17
Diamond Heights Tu 830pm	400.00	400.00	Mission Fellowship		259.73
Each Day a New Beginning F 7am		528.00	Mission Terrace W 8pm		142.40
Each Day A New Beginning Su 8am		234.62	Monday Beginners M 8pm		300.00
Each Day a New Beginning Th 7am		198.82	New Highs W 130pm		70.80
Each Day a New Beginning Tu 7am		476.82	New Hope Big Book M 630pm		22.69
Each Day a New Beginning W 7am		583.08	New Life W 7pm		128.25
Early Joyous & Free Th 7am		60.00	Newcomers Tu 8pm		36.14
Easy Does It Tu 6pm		160.00	Newcomers Group Tu 7pm		214.50
Early Start F 6pm		576.16	No Reservation M 12pm		120.15
Embarcadero Group 5D 1210pm		855.18	One Liners Th 830pm		1,081.23
Endless Summer F 830pm		26.00	Parkside Th 830pm		85.50
Epiphany Group Th 8pm	35.00	35.00	Park Presidio M 830pm		175.20
Eureka Step Tu 6pm		113.00	Pax West M 12pm		679.68
Eureka Valley Topic M 6pm		827.70	Pax West Th 12pm		184.04
Federal Speaker Su 12pm		210.22	Rebound W 830pm		85.00
Fell Street Step Su 8pm		61.53	Rule 62 W 10pm		279.00
Fireside Chat Sa 9pm		180.00	Saturday Afternoon Meditation Sat 5pm	124.20	124.20
Fireside Chat Th 8pm		213.28	Saturday Easy Does It Sa 12pm		351.29
Fireside Chat Tu 8pm		81.28	Saturday Matinee 2pm		60.00
Founders' Group Sa 5pm	28.20	28.20	Saturday Night Regroup Sat 730pm	156.91	341.64
Four Forty Niners F 8pm		67.20	Seacliff Th 830pm		151.70
Friday All Groups F 830pm		1,806.68	Serenity House		500.00
Friday Lunchtime Step F 12pm	140.00	140.00	Serenity Seekers M 730pm		945.00
Friendly Circle Su 830pm	714.00	968.34	SFPOA Th 7pm		210.00
Gold Mine Group M 8pm		294.92	Sisters Circle Su 6pm		370.45
Goodlands Su 2pm		88.98	Sober & Centered F 7pm		120.95
Happy Hour Ladies Night F 530pm		288.42	Sober Across the Board M-Sa 830am	20.00	80.00
High Noon Friday 1215pm	347.93	699.87	Sometimes Slowly Sa 11am		112.59
High Noon Monday 1215pm	115.27	633.75	Step Talk Su 830am	120.00	791.18
High Noon Thursday 1215pm	117.60	343.20	Stepping Out Sat 6pm		32.77
High Noon Tuesday 1215pm	149.82	435.24	Stepping Stone Step Study M 7pm		375.00
High Noon Wednesday 1215pm	128.30	356.71	Steppin' Up Tu 630pm		76.80
High Steppers W 7pm	135.98	135.98	Straight Jackets Th 9am	32.40	126.03
Hilldwellers M 8pm		74.40	Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag Su 1030am		365.79
Home Group Sat 830pm		292.80	Sunday Night Castro Speaker Disc Su 730pm		1,041.62
Hoodlum Haven F 8pm	760.00	760.00	Sunday Rap Sun 8pm		81.00

Name	June 2006	YTD	Name	June 2006	YTD
Sundown Steps Th 630pm	74.37	197.37	Too Early Sat 8am		312.05
Sundown W 7pm		203.33	Transrecovery F 630pm		9.40
Sunrise Sunset Women's Step Th 545pm		109.20	Tuesday Big Book Study Tu 6pm	42.00	132.00
Sunset 11'ers F		50.00	Tuesday's Daily Reflections Tu 7am	66.00	93.36
Sunset 11'ers Su		102.85	Tuesday Downtown Tu 8pm		427.40
Sunset 11'ers Tu		87.00	Unconditional Surrender F 10am	31.00	31.00
Sunset 11'ers W		20.00	Valencia Smokefree F 6pm		120.00
Sunset 9'ers F	74.94	300.53	Walk of Shame W 8pm		120.00
Sunset 9'ers M		119.11	Washington Square M 7pm	95.85	95.85
Sunset 9'ers Sa	249.36	381.01	Waterfront Sun 8pm	206.58	573.10
Sunset 9'ers Th	61.80	126.38	We Care Tu 12pm		313.08
Sunset 9'ers Tu		213.68	Wednesday Women's Big Book W 615pm		180.00
Sunset 9'ers W		196.09	West Portal W 915pm		103.21
Sunset Sobriety Th 730pm		278.00	Wits End Step Study Tu 8pm		34.92
Sunset Speaker Step Sun 730pm		80.00	Women Living Sober Sa 1030am		79.89
Sutter Street Beginners Sat 6pm		187.00	Women's 10 Years Plus Th 615pm		223.20
Ten Years After Su 6pm		410.56	Women's Kitchen Table Group Tu 630pm		82.75
The 24 Hour Plan M 7am		112.80	Women's Promises F 7pm		78.85
The Drive Thru W 1215pm		309.29	Work In Progress Sat 7pm		57.77
The Parent Trap M 1230pm		272.59	YAHOO Step Sa 11am		35.00
They Stopped In Time M 8pm		130.98	Total SF Group Contributions	\$ 6,868.85	\$41,133.75
Thursday Night Women's Th 630pm	378.53	378.53	TOTAL	\$13,288.55	\$66,864.69

Making a Leap in Sobriety

By Anonymous

In my drinking days, I usually had a good job and made sure that I had some money coming in so I could afford to buy my beer and shots when I wanted them. I was a big taker and thought that the world owed me a living and enough money to keep me happy and content. Of course I was lazy, and somehow always got away with doing the minimal amount of work to get that paycheck. I somehow had the ability to keep all the balls in the air for awhile and manage work and drinking. That cannot last long for most folks – and it didn't in my case, either.

After I hit bottom and started the road to recovery, I was also going through some true soul-searching. I wanted to do what I wanted to do for a living and not what "the man" wanted me to do. (My rebellious and opinionated attitude does work to my advantage, sometimes.) So, after visiting a career counselor and taking some community classes, I found that a career in the visual arts would fit me. In my previous career, I was in the marketing and sales business and liked the notion of advertising and visual communications, so this was a good area to shift toward. I went back to school and got my certification in graphic communications and web design. At the same time, I received a referral from my sponsor and landed my first client. I was freaked but I

went for it. Shortly thereafter, I started my own graphic design business. It seems like this would be a natural progression for me since I don't like to work for anyone and do have that character defect of self-will. I took a business planning class and moved on with a freelance, contract business. "The rest," as they say, "is history."

It's been quite an experience and I have learned many things about budgeting, invoicing and business development, among other things. I am lucky that my undergraduate degree was in business and marketing. I have my own studio space and have done quite a bit of work in my five years' plus of sobriety. I am now in the beginning stages of starting a collective with other creative professionals in order to share resources and business.

Wow, I am actually learning to share. If it weren't for A.A. and my Higher Power, none of this would be happening. I am extremely grateful every time I think of what I was like and what I am like now. If I hadn't received that moment of clarity when I did, and let it in, I would still be sitting on the barstool talking about this stuff, and never actually doing it. Having a business in sobriety is wonderful, scary, but very well worth it. ↑

Working My Program at Work

by Jennifer C.

In a meeting the other day the topic of fear of economic insecurity came up. Someone remarked that she knew a woman who in early sobriety won the lottery! Many sighs of envy peppered the room. A dream come true, right? All that money and all you get to do all day is go to meetings! No economic insecurities at all! I remember wishing like crazy that would happen to me in my early sobriety. Why couldn't I be that lucky?

I am lucky. I have a job. I get to work in an office, and every morning I have to wake up earlier than I would like to, get cleaned up, brush my hair and my teeth and wear clothes I would never choose to wear in any other situation. I get to sit in an overly air conditioned office under fluorescent lights and talk to people I would never engage with on the street. I have to be on time, smile, be pleasant and be helpful. I have to follow rules, have expectations placed upon me and I have to WORK! Sound bitter? A little...

My work history has been a long one. I've been employed for many different companies in many different fields,

but never, ever would I have won "Employee of the Month". Especially during those times when I would come to work drunk or hung over. I was moody, cranky, sick and tired.

I committed time card fraud and swore like a drunken sailor on shore leave. I've stolen because I thought it was 'owed' to me. I would threaten to quit time and again or quit without notice. I was fired at least three times. I never thought I was being paid what I was worth but suffered from constant fear and would never seek out a new job or be able to ask for a raise. I was bitter, angry and full of resentments. I'd never even heard of the word 'gratitude.'

Then I got sober and everything changed.

I worked the steps. I learned about resentments and my part in them. I learned that my part can be staying in a situation that is not comfortable for me. I learned about

making amends to companies I thought had been taking

(Continued on page 17)

The Tools of the Program

by Jean T.

Which tools of the program work best? All of them! When I am isolating, a meeting takes me out of myself, gets me out of the house or work and helps get me from the problem to the solution. I can socialize before or after the meeting. If I walk to the meeting, I can get a little helpful exercise. I can hear how someone else has solved a problem. When I can't get to a meeting, a phone call to a sponsor or fellow A.A. member or a phone call from a sponsee can help.

If I'm on the bus or in a waiting room, a piece of literature can be just what I need. I also like to use a story from the Grapevine as a "share," when the meeting is small and everyone knows each other's story. Also a story from the second half of the Big Book can serve that purpose. Reading from a piece of literature can be just the ticket to take me from focusing on the problem to focusing on the solution. It can allow me to think outside the box and look for a spiritual approach.

What about the slogans? When I am in the process of reacting, "Think, Think, Think!" can help. Sometimes I just need to remember, "First Things First" or "Easy Does It." It also helps me a lot to invite God into a relationship or a situation that I am overwhelmed by.

What about the steps? Whenever I get a new sponsor or want to bring my recovery to a new level, I like to do the steps again. I have never felt worse from doing the steps again, and I have always gained a new awareness and spirituality. If I am going through the steps with a sponsee, I try to do them again myself. Sometimes just keeping up with a sponsee going through the steps can be healing.

Service also comes to mind as a tool of the program. Service at a meeting level makes me a part of the meeting and makes me feel like the meeting is my meeting. I develop a sense of responsibility for the well-being of the meeting. I learn how to let go when my commitment is up. Service can take the form of talking to a newcomer, being treasurer, doing set up and clean up, being GSR, and writing articles for *The Point*!

Gratitude is one of my favorite tools of the program, since it takes me out of the problem and allows some space for God to work in my life. This brings me to the tool of writing, such as letters to God, my Fourth Step, my daily inventory and a gratitude list. I am grateful today for the opportunity to be of service to the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. ↑

IFB Meeting Summary — August 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	
Andy T.	Waterfront	A*	David P.	Goodlands	P	Nicholas L.	Some Are Sicker Than...	P
Anil K.	Tiburon Monday Mens Stag	P	Derek D.	Reality Farm	P	Nicholas S.	Sutter St. Beginners	P
Anthony J.	Founders Group	P	Don B.	Friday Fell Street	P	Omar C.	Tuesday Chip	P
Armando R.	Home Group	P	Dylan C.	They Stopped in Time	P	Orion P.	Marina Dock 6am	A*
Beatrice L.	Mid Morning Support	P	Gaspar L.	Keep It Simple	P	Patty M.	Huntington Square	P
Brian H.	Living Sober with HIV	A*	Greg S.	Beginner's Warmup	A*	Penelope P.	Amazing Grace	A*
Brian K.	Eureka Valley Topic Disc.	A**	Joe H.	Gratitude Group	P	Rebekah D.	Fell Street Step	P
Bruce K.	Sunset Speaker Step	P	Judi C.	Tuesday's Daily Reflections	A*	Richard R.	We Care	A*
Carol E.	Happy Hour	P	Karen S.	Alumni Group	P	Rick K.	Join the Tribe	P
Casey L.	Sunday Corte Madera	P	Karin K.	24 Hour Plan	P	Scott N.	Sunset 11'ers Sat.	P
Chris H.	Friendly Circle	P	Larry B.	Castro Discussion	P	Stephanie R.	Live & Let Live	A**
Chris T.	Keep Coming Back	P	Liz C.	Mill Valley Speaker	P	Stephen R.	Valencia Smokefree	P
Chuck K.	Ten Years After	P	Luis M.	High Noon Tuesday	A*	Steve N.	Terra Linda Group	P
Clifford B.	Spawn of Straight Jacket	A*	Mark W.	Blue Book Special	P	Steve S.	Homegroup	P
Dan C.	Sunday Night Castro SD	A*	Matt T.	Fairfax Friday Night	A*	Tedra M.	Come N Get It	A*
Dan Z.	Each Day a New Beginning	P	Maury P.	Central Office Manager	P	Terry B.	High Noon Thursday	R
Dana R.	Saturday Sunset 9'ers	A*	Michael L.	Attitude Adjustment Hour	P	Tom R.	Mill Valley 7AM	P
Danna P.	Treasurer	P	Michelle W.	Cow Hollow Young Peoples	A*	Vickey D.	Sisters Circle	P
Daniel B.	Too Early	A*	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					IFB Liaisons Present			
Jamie G.	Sesame Step		Ben N.	Stepping Up Group		Casey L.	Marin Teleservice	
Drea B.	Serenity Seekers		Thea L.	Walk of Shame		Karen S.	SF General Service	
Karen A.	West Portal		Rebecca	Valencia Smokefree		Trevor F.	Marin General Service	

Following is an unofficial summary of actions, information, upcoming business and service opportunities discussed at the August 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: Scott noted the enthusiasm at the last COC meeting and listed goals he'd like to see the IFB achieve this term: 1. A Service Manual study. 2. Taking a group inventory to evaluate the group's efficacy. 3. Continue outreach to groups not represented in the IFB.

Treasurer's Report: Net Income for June of \$3,759 was \$3,595 more than the budgeted Net Income of \$164. Unrestricted Cash as of June 30, 2006 totaled \$49, 4111 and is sufficient to pay for budgeted expenses for three months.

Central Office Manager's Report: We would like to update the tape library and switch over to CD. If anyone has access to such equipment please contact Central Office. There are two afternoon phone shifts open; a year of sobriety is required. We may save on printing costs by changing the size of the SF schedule to 8 1/2" x 3". It is currently 5" x 3 1/2". It was also decided to resurrect the Schedule Committee to explore options and each IFB rep was asked to take the question back to the groups. The Literature Committee met with our General Service delegate. At the last conference, no action was taken toward the publishing of the Central Office/Intergroup pamphlet.

Central Office Committee Report: New COC positions elected are: David P., Chair and Rebekah D., Secretary. Bylaws pertaining to the Treasurer's term need to be examined. The matter will be deferred to the Bylaws Committee. The date of the annual COC was set for August 26, 2006.

Reading of the 12 Traditions and the 7th tradition collected \$75.51.

2. Non-IFB Liaison Reports:

General Service, SF: Most of the last General Service meeting was spent receiving the conference report from our delegate. Several pieces of literature revisions were discussed. The next General Service meeting is August 8, 2006 at the First Unitarian Church in San Francisco.

General Service, Marin: The second annual National AA Meeting will be held in Mongolia August 13-15, 2006. Unity Day will be held at the Corte Madera Rec Center on Saturday, Sept. 16th.

Marin Teleservice: Phones are getting answered. Currently, there are no positions available. Casey also announced auditions for the Marin Unity Day Talent Show.

3. Standing Committee Reports:

Teleservice: A written report was submitted.

SF PI/CPC: Recent activities were listed. At the last quarterly work-

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shop, there were 20 attendees, 12 of whom were new members to PI/CPC. Bruce encouraged all to learn more by attending a meeting on the second Monday of each month at Central Office.

4. Ad Hoc Committee Reports:

Outreach Committee: The Outreach Committee has been inactive for nearly a year. Scott N. stated that he plans to resurrect the committee. No meeting time has been announced.

Literature Review Committee: The 60th anniversary of the Central Office is approaching. Steve reported that the committee is considering a pamphlet describing the history of Central Office.

The Point: The committee is currently looking for a graphics design volunteer to help with layout. Victor noted that some ideas the committee has come up with are changing the current cover, and announcing monthly themes for the coming year in order to encourage greater submissions from the AA community.

Orientation: Tony is currently the only committee member. Orientation is just prior to each IFB meeting to orient new IFB members.

Website Committee: The committee meets on the second Thursday of each month at 6pm. Dan announced that the committee is trying to have accurate information on the website regarding meeting spaces ADA accessibility. He asked members to survey their meeting sites and report back to the committee with additional information. This committee also has a new member with experience in project management.

12 Step Committee: There is a 12th Step Workshop at 6:30 pm on Wednesday, August 9, 2006 at Central Office.

Special Needs: During the last meeting, several members shared about

their experience with ASL services and services for members who are

hard-of-hearing. The committee will continue to do outreach in this area. The group is also investigating wheel chair compliant spaces. The committee is also considering a name change to "Access Committee."

Archives: This group reviews and sorts archived material in Central Office.

Trusted Servant Workshop Committee: Two very successful workshops have been held so far. The next workshop will be on Sept. 9th and will focus on the Literature Commitment.

5. Group Rep Reports

Patty M. raised the general issue of lack of respect for her service commitment to the IFB.

Steve N. noted a lack of representation from most meetings in Marin. He stated one way he approached groups to elect representation is to state that groups should have a voice in how Central Office uses the money sent in.

Steve R. announced the 6th anniversary of Valencia Smoke Free at its new space. They will be having a dinner and meeting on August 19, 2006 at 2900 24th.

Michael L. asked how groups handle issues with Treasurers. Some responses were:

Send contributions in monthly to avoid high bank balances, become familiar with the pamphlet "Where Money and Spirituality Mix," hold monthly business meetings to discuss these issues.

Gaspar L. announced that the Saturday 8:00 Candlelight Meeting has moved to Davies Medical Center.

The next IFB Meeting will be held at the First Unitarian Church at 1187 Franklin St. in San Francisco at 7:00 pm on September 6, 2006. ↑

(Continued from page 15)

advantage of me. I learned what character defects I had and that I could ask to have them removed. I learned that being of service and having integrity were more valuable than money. I learned that I had to work my program at work.

After getting sober there have been many mornings I've walked through the door SURE that today would finally be THE day; a day filled with spirituality, serenity, letting go and letting God, living one day at a time. Each morning before I leave my apartment I get down on my knees and pray to my Higher Power to be of service, to remove my defects of character. I enter the workplace with my 'Just for Today' prayer card, my A.A. chip and a resolution to be a "worker among workers".

That day has never come. Not a whole day anyway, but maybe half a day, or even an hour or two. Progress, not perfection. I still have moments where I would love to grab my purse and storm out the door over some self-justified wrong. I gossip with the best of them and judge others performances. I'm late or even lazy at times. I'm constantly on the lookout for what is fair or unfair and I'll jump on my soapbox at the drop of a hat! I'm still

afraid to ask for a raise and to leave the familiar for the unknown. I am FAR from perfect!

But I don't show up to work after having a 'few' beers at lunch. I don't show up hours late, or not at all. I don't show up half asleep, sick or cranky. I don't make a horse's behind out of myself on a daily basis. I certainly don't steal, commit fraud or lie anymore! If that isn't progress, I don't know what is!

I am so grateful for the opportunity to be of service to someone else, even if it isn't for someone in the A.A. program. I have found there are so many ways to be of service! The best feeling in the world is to do a good job, even without praise or thanks. To fall into bed, exhausted from having a purpose in life, (even though it is not my PRIMARY purpose!) for having done a job well.

Somewhere along the way I've lost that 'the world owes me a living' attitude. I may not make the kind of money I'd like to make, I don't have all the things I want, but I have what I need. Money wouldn't make me happy anyway. It never did. I see that now. ↑

Y.A.H.O.O.— You Always Have Other Options

by Bree L.

Y.A.H.O.O. or You Always Have Other Options talks to me because I'm the best obsessive, compulsive, on task, alcoholic going. How many times have I thought, "My way or the highway?"

I was having consternations about my boss. (Funny how I always have those problems with authority type people?) I made an emergency appointment with my sponsor because this was big-time stuff that needed to be taken care of ASAP. I told her how poorly I was being treated. My boss just didn't see my worth and showed favoritism to other workers over me and took off early on Fridays when she was supposed to stay at work. My sponsor said, "Have you tried prayer?"

That was certainly not the answer I wanted. Quitting or reporting my boss to her supervisor was what I had in mind. How could prayer help when I needed quick results? Prayer could take forever. Then my sponsor brought out the Big Book and we reread page 66 and 67 once again. It's that part that starts with, "We realized that the people who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick." I began to acquiesce that maybe this was a possible solution.


Today pages 66 and 67 of my Big Book are underlined and highlighted with notes in the margin and discolored with coffee stains. Moreover, I've slowly come around to seeing prayer as an option. However, it is generally not my first choice. I've prayed for my

mother, a mother-in-law, a son-in-law, an ex-husband and that old boss among many others.

This is not to say that prayer is my only option but I do find that saying a prayer for that other dastardly person somehow, miraculously makes me feel better. Then when the dust settles, I can see there just might be another choice beyond deleting them from my instant message list, writing a nasty email, quitting, or complaining to anyone that will listen. Prayer even works for the big stuff like finances, relationships and job procurement. Prayer provides perspective and an idea of what the next right action might be.

In conclusion, my *other options*, including prayer, have aided me in doing the next right thing. Years after the troubles with my boss, I learned that the higher ups at my job wanted to fire me but my boss fought to keep me on. I am also finding that the relationship with the in-laws from hell has improved. A couple of them are even in this program. It's a wonder.


In addition to prayer, another option I have when the going gets tough, is a Tenth Step or Fourth Step on the person or issue causing me pain. It always surprises me, what comes up with those Fourth Steps, things I never thought and – gasp—solutions.

The tools of prayer and step work help me understand that other choices are always available. 

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 each submission 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 publication. 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. No payment can be made for submissions, nor can material be returned. At times, articles may be reprinted without the author's permission, but the author's byline will always be included in these cases. Email submissions to: thepoint@aasf.org. This policy is subject to revision. 

Financial Statement

May 2006 - Intercounty Fellowship of AA

	Jun 06	Jan - Jun 06		Jun 06	Jan - Jun 06
Ordinary Income/Expense					
Income					
Contributions from Groups					
Group Contributions	13,288.55	66,864.69	Repair & Maintenance	210.74	1,302.18
Total Contributions from Groups	13,288.55	66,864.69	Security System	33.50	266.00
Contributions from Individuals			Special Events	850.00	1,350.00
Individual - Unrestricted	1,408.00	5,529.73	Telephone	262.33	1,457.58
Faithful Fiver	467.00	3,384.00	Phone Book Listings	76.50	459.00
Honorary Contributions	139.00	902.15	Utilities	244.21	1,339.51
Total Contributions from Individuals	2,014.00	9,815.88	Bad Checks	0.00	0.00
Gratitude Month			Total Expense	15,870.65	95,379.74
Gratitude Month - Groups	550.00	3,500.28	Net Ordinary Income	3,727.21	7,242.91
Total Gratitude Month	550.00	3,500.28	Other Income/Expense		
Sales - Bookstore	8,589.91	54,229.95	Other Income		
Special Event Income	223.00	2,953.14	Interest Income	367.35	1,757.44
Newsletter Subscript.	22.12	264.52	Total Other Income	367.35	1,757.44
Total Income	24,687.58	137,628.46	Other Expense		
Cost of Goods Sold			Depreciation Expense	96.43	2,191.76
Cost of Books Sold	4,940.59	34,090.21	Amortization Expense	238.78	1,432.68
Credit Card Processing Fees	149.13	915.60	Total Other Expense	335.21	3,624.44
Total COGS	5,089.72	35,005.81	Net Other Income	32.14	-1,867.00
Gross Profit	19,597.86	102,622.65	Net Income	<u>\$ 3,759.35</u>	<u>\$ 5,375.91</u>
Expense					
Employee Expenses					
Wages & Salaries	7,826.10	46,017.89			
Employer Tax Expenses	614.19	4,510.74			
Health Benefits	952.00	5,113.00			
Workers Comp Ins.	0.00	714.61			
Total Employee Expenses	9,392.29	56,356.24			
Professional Fees					
Accounting	0.00	330.00			
Computer Consulting	0.00	343.75			
Outside Services	0.00	294.00			
Professional Fees - Other	0.00	-330.00			
Total Professional Fees	0.00	637.75			
Bank Charges					
Credit Card Clearing	0.00	0.00			
Bank Charges - Other	0.00	0.00			
Total Bank Charges	0.00	0.00			
Postage					
Bulk Mail	200.00	600.00			
Postage - Other	132.01	243.01			
Total Postage	332.01	843.01			
Rent - Office	3,833.75	23,002.50			
Rent - Other	300.00	450.00			
Filing/Fees	0.00	320.00			
Insurance	0.00	1,826.00			
Internet Expense	76.27	577.90			
Office Supplies	192.71	1,536.18			
Shipping	66.34	145.04			
Equipment Lease	0.00	3,510.85			

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