

FIREWORKS IN A.A.: DAYS OF RAGE AT THE IFB

by Ben N.

A publication of the

intercountry Fellowship

of Alcoholics Anonymous

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“These are times that try men’s souls.” “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times....” These quotes from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, respectively, describe the state of the IFB (Intercountry Fellowship Board) a few short years ago, in the twenty-first century.

I had been a member of the IFB a few years earlier, at which time the meetings were mainly known for being boring. At least they were to me. I was expecting more of the same when I rejoined: fighting to stay awake, squirming in my chair, looking at my wristwatch, praying for the meeting to end. Was I ever in for a surprise.

Something had changed drastically from the “old days.” A new breed of IFB rep had come to the mix and it was apparent from my first meeting.

To begin with, there were more people present at the meetings. In earlier times, it had been sometimes difficult to attract even a quorum of the small membership. And those who did attend usually sat seemingly in a stupor and disinterested in the proceedings.

Now, the atmosphere was electric.

The members chatted animatedly among themselves before the meetings, discussing rumors that had darted about like crazed electrons since the last meeting.

An expectant hush would fall over the group as the meeting began. And, then, the fun—if fun it could be called—began.

It has been my experience that A.A. is full of “strong personalities” and more than a few had joined the IFB. And the old phrase I had heard, “A.A. is not a hotbed of mental


(Continued on page 6)



monthly calendar

Events, Highlights and Happenings

July 2008

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2 <u>FIRST WED</u> Intercounty Fellowship Board Orientation 6 pm, Annual 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)	3	4 Independence Day - Central Office Closed Living Sober Conference Starts!	5 Living Sober Conference! Info on Page 5!
6 Living Sober Conference! Info on Page 5!	7 <u>FIRST MON</u> Access Committee, Central Office; 5:30pm	8 <u>SECOND TUE</u> SF Bridging The Gap 1187 Franklin St., 6:30 pm Fellowship Committee, Central Office, 7pm Marin H&I, 1360 Lincoln, San Rafael, Bus. Meeting: 7:15 pm SF General Service 1187 Franklin St. Meeting: 8 pm	9 <u>SECOND WED</u> 12th Step Workshop Central Office, 6:30 pm Marin Bridging the Gap 1360 Lincoln Ave San Rafael Alano Club, 6:30 pm	10 <u>SECOND THU</u> Trusted Servants Workshop Committee Central Office, 6:00 pm	11	12
13	14 <u>SECOND MON</u> SF Public Information/ Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC) Committee Central Office, 7 pm	15 <u>THIRD TUE</u> San Mateo General Service, St. Andrews Church, 7:30 pm	16 <u>THIRD WED</u> Website Committee, Central Office; 6:30pm	17	18	19
20 <u>THIRD SUN</u> Archives Committee, Central Office, 2 pm Business Meeting followed by Work Day	21 <u>THIRD MON</u> SF Teleservice Central Office, 6:30 pm Marin General Service 9 Ross Valley Rd, San Rafael, District Meeting: 8 pm	22 <u>FOURTH TUE</u> Marin Teleservice 1360 Lincoln Ave San Rafael Alano Club, 7:30 pm	23	24	25	26 <u>FOURTH SAT</u> General Service CNCA Meeting 320 N. McDowell Petaluma; Business Meeting: 12:30 pm
27	28	29	30	31 <u>LAST THU</u> SF H&I Old First Church, 1751 Sacramento St. SF Orientation: 7:15 pm Committee Meeting: 8 pm		

From the Editor

I have a confession to make—the acronym soup of A.A. governance structure makes my eyes glaze over. CNCA, GSR, GSO, IFB—enough already! However, this issue is loaded with surprisingly entertaining articles about the business side of Alcoholics Anonymous. From them, I learned how A.A. works its magic—how an ongoing volunteer organization keeps the hand of A.A. available when someone needs it. Such a task requires the hard work of members willing to represent their group’s conscience at conferences and the meetings where decisions happen. Thank you, to all our members doing service outside the group!

We are also blessed with, not one, not two, but THREE letters to the editor this month. Following last month’s

Sober Scope

I love Leo. But then again, most people do. Leos have certainly never been accused of being a “glum lot.”


You have playfulness and a sunny disposition, a refreshing honesty, deep loyalty, and a tremendous spirit of self-sacrifice. You also know how to have a good time. Right now, you’re probably reading this as you relax in a sunny pasture, surrounded by adoring admirers.

Lions love to be the center of attention. Ruled by the sun, Leo feels right at home being the center of our universe. They’re ambitious, courageous, strong-willed, positive, independent, and self-confident. They’re the cuddly cats we want sitting softly in our laps and the

letter, which opined that our May issue’s “*Twelve Differences between Your Sponsor and Your Therapist*” was too hard on sponsors, we received two more. This time, our correspondents thought it insulting to therapists. All pointed out that A.A. takes no position on outside issues, including therapy

Another correspondent addresses last month’s cover story on self-support and literature sales and suggests that the topic of money in A.A. may be somewhat taboo. Do tell!

Please keep those letters coming. We are happy to hear from you.

We also want to send a fond farewell and big thank-you to Rick K., our layout person for the past 18 months. We will miss you! —Editor 

Leo: July 23-Aug. 22

by Madame Salami

fierce protectors we want loudly roaring at any danger that may come our way.

Yes, it’s hard not to love you sweet kitty, but it’s time we had a good heart-to-heart.

They don’t call it a “pride” of lions for nothing. It’s not one of your prettier traits, but we all know that with accolades may come arrogance, which is also associated with my feline friends. You sometimes take that center of the universe *shtick* a bit too far ... and a bit too literally for your family and friends. You can also be quick-tempered, blunt and nasty, and quick to sudden rage. But you’re so big-hearted that most overlook these undesirable defects, but

the Point

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you and me and the universe, lovely lion, know they’re still there.

Defects can be removed, but it takes some work. Pursue their removal like you do everything else, with enthusiasm and a creative spirit. Throw in a little humility, and you’ll be purring like a kitten in no time.

P.S. My sincerest apologies to the gracious Geminis who were left out of my June SoberScope musings ... including moi. Nonetheless, a word or two for the twins: communication is not gossip and gossip is not communication. Don’t worry so much about the “right” words; focus on the “true” ones. It’s not easy, but the rewards are endless.





New Meeting:

Wed	7:00am	Park Merced	SUNSET EARLY MORNING, Church, 2690 Ocean Ave./ 19th Ave. (BK, 45 Minute Meeting)
Wed	7:30am	Marina	11TH STEP MEDITATION MEETING, 2118 Greenwich St./ Fillmore (MED./ DI)

Meeting Changes:

Sat	12:15pm	Mission	HIGH NOON SATURDAY, 390 Valencia St./ 15th St. (was 1661 15th St., Church)
Sat	12 Midnight	Inner Richmond	MIDNIGHT MEDITATION, Church, 4301 Geary/ 7th Ave. (was 1396 La Playa St./ Judah St.)
Wed	7:15pm	Hayes Valley	EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH & HOPE, S.F. Alano Club, 1748 Market St. (was 7pm)
Thu	7:30pm	Bayview	STAYING SOBER, McKinnon/ 3rd St. CANCELLED TILL JULY 10, 2008 (was 6:15pm)

No Longer Meeting:

Tue	8:00pm	Inner Sunset	GRUPO FE Y AMOR Church, 1329 7th Ave./ Irving St.
Wed	7:30pm	Novato	TWICE BLESSED, 853 Tamalpais Ave.

Please Note: 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. *Thanks for your help in keeping the schedule accurate!*

RECENTLY REGISTERED TRUSTED SERVANTS - MAY 2008

Below are the meetings whose Trusted Servants registered with Central Office during May 2008 - twenty in San Francisco and five in Marin. Thank you for registering!

San Francisco -

6am Marina Dock Sat. 6am; **7am Smokeless** Sun. 7am; **A Vision For You** Sun. 6:30pm; **Came to Believe** Sun. 8:30am; **Come & Get It!** Fri. 6:30pm, **Happy Destiny** Sat. 6:30pm; **End of Isolation** Thu. 6pm; **Faith, Hope And Charity** Fri. 12noon; **Firefighters & Friends** Tue. 10:30am; **High Noon Thursday** Thu. 12:15pm; **Home Group** Sat. 8:30pm; **Huntington Square** Wed. 6:30pm; **Keep Coming Back** Sat. 11am; **Midnight Meditation** Sat. 12midnight; **Noon Smokeless** Fri. 12noon; **One Liners** Thu. 8:30pm; **Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag** Sun. 9:30am; **Sunset 9'ers** Fri. 9am; **Sunset 9'ers** Sun. 8am; **Sunset 11'ers** Thu. 11am

Marin -

Novato Group Fri. – Night Discussion Fri. 8:30pm; **Serendipity** Sat. 11am; **Steps to Freedom** Mon. 7:30pm; **Tuesday Twelve Step** Tue. 6:30pm; **Working Dogs** Wed. 12:05pm

CONTRIBUTIONS

to Central Office were made through June 15, 2008 honoring the following members:

ONGOING MEMORIALS

Daryl S., Ken M.,
Mary W., John T., Pat O'B.,
Pat T., Silas P.

ANNIVERSARIES

Ted S. 16 years
Terra Linda Group:
Steve N. 6 years
Alameda: Jim H. 20 years
Afro-American Beginners:
Herman B. 37 years
High Noon: Ed H. 17 years

COMING UP

mark your calendar

TIBURON HAVEN GROUP

**Strawberry Rec Center Auditorium,
118 Strawberry Dr, Mill Valley**

- July 6, 2008: Michael P., San Francisco, CA
over 30 years of sobriety!
July 27, 2008: Nikki N., Hollywood, CA
25 years of sobriety!

Childcare Available!
Special 90 Minute Meetings Listed Above!
Meets 12noon Every Sunday for its regular
Open Speaker Meeting!

July 4, 2008 Celebration!

Meeting, Music & Barbecue!
Marin Alano Club, 1360 Lincoln near 3rd Ave.,
San Rafael, CA
12noon: Speaker Meeting
1pm: Barbecue (with donation)
Music - All Afternoon!

12th Step Workshop!

Help Central Office and Teleservice
carry the AA message by becoming a
12th Step Volunteer. Share & Learn
about the 12th Step at 6:30pm,
Wednesday, July 9, 2008, Central
Office, 1821 Sacramento St., S.F.
Everyone Welcome!

Broads without Booze XIII!

Broads Without Booze XII;
Irish Cultural Center; 2700 45th Ave.,
S.F., **Sunday, July 27, 2008**, Lunch:
12noon; Speaker Meeting: 1:30pm;
\$26 for Lunch; More info at
linda_gemini@yahoo.com or
call Linda W. (650-593-2124),
Pre-registration for Lunch Required!

BRISBANE BREAKFAST BUNCH

250 Visitation Way, Community Center
(under library), Brisbane, Sunday, 11AM

- 07/06 Speaker: Eddison From: Ham & Eggers
07/13 Speaker: Don B. From: Pleasanton Tuesday Noon
07/20 Speaker: Selma G. From: Daly City Wed. Happy Hour
07/27 Speaker: Joy C. From: Daly City Wed. Happy Hour

FRIDAY NIGHT ALL GROUPS

1101 O'Farrell St. Urban Life Center, SF, 8:30 pm

- | | | |
|--|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 07/04 Host Group: Father Alfred's | Speaker: Tony D. | From: Saturday Easy Does It! |
| 07/11 Host Group: Terra Linda Men's Stag | Speaker: Bill R. | From: Serenity House Open |
| 07/18 Host Group: San Mateo Morning Serenity | Speaker: Curtis V. | From: Too Early |
| 07/25 Host Group: Too Early | Speaker: Gerry H. | From: Naperville, Illinois |

Persons requiring reasonable accommoda-
tions at meetings of IFB, COC, IFB
committees and service events sponsored
by the preceding entities, including sign
language interpreters, assistive listening
devices or print materials in alternative
format should contact Central Office—
(415) 674-1821—no less than five
business days prior to the event.



Western Roundup - Living Sober 2008!

Grand Hyatt Hotel, Union Square, July 4 - 6, 2008

Living Sober is an Annual Conference hosted by Clean
and Sober A.A. Members of the Gay, Lesbian,
Bisexual, and Transgendered Community with
Al-Anon Family Group Participation!

Friday: 6:30pm Open Speaker Meeting
Friday: 9pm Living Sober 2008 Musical!
Saturday: 6:30pm Open Speaker Meeting
Sunday: 1:30pm Living Sober 2008 Musical!
Sunday: 4:30pm Closing Speaker Meeting

Everyone is Welcome!

Go to **www.livingsober.org** for more information!

Spirit of S.F. Chili Cook-Off!

Sunday, July 20th 2008

The Janet Pomeroy Center

207 Skyline Blvd., SF, CA (near the S.F. Zoo)

2pm: Chili Tasting & Music, 4pm: Open Speaker Meeting,
5pm: Chili Cook-Off Awards!

Live Music!

\$10 per person

(Fireworks in AA: continued from page 1)

health,” soon began playing over and over in my mind as events unfolded over the next several months.

Change is accompanied by chaos, and we were experiencing a period of major change. The Central Office manager of several years had retired and we had a new manager. Then, that manager decided to retire. This was amidst much unpleasantness and questions of mismanagement and fiscal irresponsibility, that ultimately proved to be completely unsubstantiated. These questions were fueled by behind-the-scenes rumors and speculation that, in turn, were fueled by—shall we say—personality conflicts. I know that’s hard to imagine happening in A.A. but, well, there you have it.

In the midst of all this, elections were held for new IFB officers. The outgoing chair had been active for many years in union politics and was adept at handling, uh, difficult meetings. He was replaced by a new chair and vice chair who came in with the hope and intention of calming the waters.

Suffice it to say, the waters were not calmed. On the contrary, there was now blood in the water. The new chair was attacked from all sides for anything and everything. One example was her suggestion to begin serving coffee at IFB meetings. This was met with a storm of protest that was breathtaking in its intensity, a storm incomprehensible other than taking it in context of the prevailing atmosphere. It put me in mind of Julius Caesar and his assassination. I had nightmares of our chair being “offed” and her ashes

“It put me in mind of Julius Caesar and his assassination. I had nightmares of our chair being ‘offed’ and her ashes placed in a coffee urn.”

placed in a coffee urn. Luckily, it never came to that.

The chair resigned within very short order. The vice chair assumed the chair—and resigned almost immediately. Things were at a boil. Tempers flared. People raised their voices, even shouted in meetings. Members resigned. Some stormed out of meetings, hurling invective in their wake. Restraint of tongue was not an overarching practice. In short, it was an ugly time.

A new chair was elected and resigned within a very few months. It was during this period that Central Office was moved to its present location. That move was, in itself, a major undertaking and drain on the energy and resources of the board.


Not long after the move, the campaign to hire a new Central Office manager began. The first recruitment effort failed because of the stinginess of the pay and benefits package, which was somewhat below subsistence level for San Francisco and was, actually, an insult to anyone who was remotely qualified for the job. Studies were made, arguments raged and, finally, a new package—in keeping with the Concepts for World Service—was put together and we once again set about recruiting a manager.

Ultimately, a large number of qualified candidates applied, were interviewed and evaluated. The number was reduced to a handful and the selection process went to the board. After lengthy discussion and voting, the field was narrowed to two candidates. Neither won a substantial majority through several ballots. In keeping with the Third Legacy, their names were placed in a hat and God decided. [This procedure is detailed in the *A.A. Service Manual*.—Ed.]

But, that wasn’t the end of it. Remember, this is A.A. and, as hard as it may be to believe, personalities sometimes take precedence over personalities. Weeks and weeks of angry and stressful meetings took place with the Central Office Committee and others concerned. Our new manager was struggling to get her feet on the ground amidst this turmoil and, ultimately, did an outstanding job of ignoring the storm raging about her and getting things organized and running smoothly at Central Office.

The controversy soon settled down at the IFB. Common courtesy was demanded and soon prevailed during meetings. A new era of peace and prosperity were upon us.

As I said at the outset, those were times that tried men’s—and women’s—souls. They were the worst of times, but also the best of times. The IFB had weathered a horrific storm and came through, stronger and wiser for the experience. The new era of good will has prevailed since those days.

But let us bear in mind: those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it. I hope we have a long collective memory. 

Dear Alky...



Dear Alky:

I have heard a lot recently at meetings about A.A.-approved literature. I came across this really great book about spirituality and positive thinking, but I feel guilty for reading it, as if I am reading something that A.A. wouldn't approve. When it comes to these kinds of books, should I just stick to the A.A. offerings?

Reticent Reader

Dear Reticent:

"A.A.-approved literature" means literature that has been approved through the General Services Conference process. The following information about the process is taken, in part, from the official A.A. website (www.AA.org):

"A.A. worldwide services, directed by A.A.

World Services, Inc., are centered in the General Service Office in New York City. A.A. Conference-approved literature is prepared, published, and distributed through this office." Literature is submitted to the individual groups, whose group consciences are then passed on to the various regional meetings via the groups' General Service Representatives. "A General Service Conference, consisting of 93 delegates from A.A. areas in the United States and Canada, and trustees, A.A.W.S. and Grapevine directors, and staff from the General Service Office and the Grapevine in New York, meets once a year and provides a link between the groups throughout the U.S. and Canada and the trustees who serve as custodians of A.A. tradition and interpreters of policies affecting the Fellowship as a whole."

Before any updates are made to the "Big Book"—our beloved text *Alcoholics Anonymous*—or before additional pamphlets are

developed for distribution by A.A.'s General Service Office—they first go through a slow but inclusive process.

A.A. meetings utilize conference-approved literature, but A.A. has no opinion on any other literature that its members might choose to read. To have any such opinion would violate our Tenth Tradition. Therefore, feel free to read any spiritual books that you find useful. The A.A. literature is not meant to be exhaustive of all spiritual truth—it is merely the distillation of the experience of our millions of members as to what has worked to keep them sober. Alky recommends basing your recovery on the Big Book and the "Twelve and Twelve" and enriching your life with whatever other books are working for you.

Happy reading!

-Alky



To CUSS OR NOT TO CUSS?

There was a prominent sign at a meeting in Central Florida that said, "Profanity is Not Spoken in Heaven." This was not an A.A.-sanctioned sign, but someone's idea of how a meeting should proceed.

In the interest of full disclosure, I have to tell you that I am a gray-haired woman with a couple sober mornings who loves to swear. I delight in nasty, raunchy words that confront and test. As a writer, I hear that dribble about how there are so many better ways to express myself. Blah, blah, blah. There probably are some fairly terrific words I could use, but nothing satisfies like a gross-out cuss word. I wanted to tell that sign maker to f— off.

There are individuals to whom swearing is an integral part of their vocabulary. The last thing I will do is wave the word critic sign at them and say they can't express themselves in their most comfortable language. It isn't the words, it's the thought that comes with them. At one time I tried to stop saying "you know" frequently. My thought process was stopped, and my speaking ground down to 33 rpm.

When the Big Book talks about restraint of pen and tongue, the last thing I think about is swearing. There is so much worse going on in today's world. Vitriolic words full of homophobic, racist, hurtful intent

aimed to injure a person's character or demean their essence can do far more harm.

Psychologists have known for years that negative discipline rarely accomplishes what is intended. The person will react more to the method of correction rather than change their behavior. Bill W. knew what he was talking about when he said, "Love and tolerance is our code." That's the regard I needed when I stopped drinking. Every so often, I might let fly with a bawdy zinger, but my resolve to stay in fit spiritual condition is every bit as strong as the next guy's.

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

The following is a list of names and email addresses for IFB Officers and for most of the IFB committees. If you are interested in doing service on a committee, or if you wish to receive more information about a committee, please email that committee at the address.

INTERGROUP OFFICERS:

CHAIR

Chuck K. chair@aasf.org

VICE CHAIR

Steve N. vicechair@aasf.org

TREASURER

Patrick M. treasurer@aasf.org

RECORDING SECRETARY

Ken J. secretary@aasf.org

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

CENTRAL OFFICE COMMITTEE

Victor V. coc@aasf.org

12th STEP COMMITTEE

Stu S. 12thstep@aasf.org

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

Tracy F. archives@aasf.org

ORIENTATION COMMITTEE

Ted R. orientation@aasf.org

THE POINT

Rich H. thepoint@aasf.org

ACCESS COMMITTEE

Virginia M. access@aasf.org

TRUSTED SERVANTS

WORKSHOP COMMITTEE

Tracy F. tsw@aasf.org

WEBSITE COMMITTEE

Michael P. website@aasf.org

SF TELESERVICE COMMITTEE

Steve R. sfteleservice@aasf.org

SF PI/CPC COMMITTEE

Paul P. picpc@aasf.org

CONVERSATIONS WITH LONG-TIMERS: NINETY-TWO AND STILL GROWING UP IN A.A.

As Told to the Drunk Whisperer

Gracious, articulate, and kind sum up Frances L. She got sober in Marin County and San Francisco and fondly recalls the “good ol’ days,” yet still attends multiple meetings a week, sponsors several women, and learns something from the newcomers.

Q. What’s your sobriety date?

A. August 15, 1962. Forty-six years, God willing, this August.

Q. Did you feel that you belonged in A.A. right away?

A. Oh, no. I didn’t want to go to A.A. I just did it to get my late and beloved sister off my back. I didn’t want to stop drinking. Yet I had blown my marriage as a result of it. I was living in Southern California. My husband locked me out of the house. So I came up here to my sister because I didn’t know where else to go and I had liver damage and was drinking. I kept thinking that my husband would drive up and take me home, but I never saw him again. Some people walk into a meeting and it’s, “Oh, I’m home,” but I didn’t feel like that. I didn’t resent it; I just didn’t get it.

Q. You must have been quite young.

A. Me? No! I was forty-six when I stopped. I’m ninety-two now. I’ve been sober half my life. A.A. saved my life, of course, but even more important, it helped me grow up. I have a ways to go yet, I don’t think we’re ever finished with that.

Q: Is there something about A.A. that has changed considerably over time?

A. It was more intimate. There are many more meetings now and I don’t think there were too many then. I think we were more dependent upon one another, that’s what I remember.

Q. Wasn’t that scary? In the early 60’s, to have your marriage fall apart, to be unemployed and sick? That wasn’t the day when women had equal opportunities.

A. I had not worked except a couple years before I was married. Then I was forty-five, looking for a job... no one wanted to hire me. That’s why I was so lucky that I got my first job through my A.A. friends, at a gallery in Jackson Square. When I was sober about twenty years, I had been working and I was tired and I wanted to do less. But I was dependent upon my salary, so I couldn’t quit work. I had this epiphany where I said to myself, “I’m really going to start to work the program.” And I got the best job I ever had. I worked for Florette P. I was her last secretary. Florette was a force of nature. She started the local chapter of the National Council on Alcoholism. After that, she and two partners raised money to found Pomeroy House, on Bryant Street, in the 1980’s. It was the first shelter for alcoholic women who wanted to recover and bring their children.

Q. Didn’t Marty M. found the National Council on Alcoholism?

A. Yes. I met Marty M. through Florette and they were good friends. Marty was very quiet. But you knew

(Continued on page 9)

MEET THE MEETING: A STEP BEYOND

by Bree L.

The Thursday night 6:00 p.m. meeting at the Baha'i Center, 170 Valencia Street, is tailor-made for those who want to focus on the steps and traditions. The format is to read a step from the Twelve and Twelve and discuss it during the meeting. The first meeting of every month, they read that month's tradition, creating a full cycle through the steps and traditions in this way. The last Thursday of the month they have someone from the group speak. This is a way to hear the stories from those who regularly attend. Every so often they bring in an outside speaker.

The meeting was started May 12, 1985, twenty-three years ago. It was soon after the Baha'i Center opened.

The Baha'i faith believes in the unification of the world for peace. Its members cannot smoke or drink. When the center opened, some of the newer members were having problems staying sober. The first meetings were limited to those of the Baha'i faith. Attendance was spotty, and the meeting was then opened up to all. Today, residents of Friendship House, which serves the Native American community, are especially welcome as their beliefs correlate with those of the Baha'i.

One early complication was that the Baha'is could not accept outside contributions. Paying the rent became a problem. After some discussion, it was decided to pay fifteen dollars for

refreshments. Also, in those first times, the A.A. members were given a key that they promptly lost and people were locked out. The solution was Paul who is considered the Baha'i "host". He opens and closes the meeting and provides refreshments.

There's an ample amount of strong sobriety at this meeting. Bernice P. just celebrated thirty-five years. She talks of first coming to A.A. and hearing someone say they had twenty-six years. Bernice commented, "Sure, and I'm the Virgin Mary." She didn't believe anyone could have that much time. Marilyn P. came with her husband to one of those first meetings. There were five people attending.

(Continued on page 11)

(Conversations: continued from page 8)

you were with a strong woman, and I mean that in the best sense. There was a reserve about her, but I don't think she missed anything. There was a modesty about her, too, that is attractive in people and is kind of rare.

Q. Did you know Earl M.?

A. Yes, in Mill Valley. He was sort of like Florette, I don't want to call them gurus, but that's what they are. Earl M. was the doctor in the chapter in the Big Book, "Physician, Heal Thyself." He told me not to worry about the fact that I craved alcohol in early sobriety, that Dr. Bob did, too. Another person who helped me in those early years was Paul G. [a former Central Office manager]. Very kind, ex-Marine, no-nonsense kind of a guy, just the sort of person you need; he was the epitome of tough love. He


was very serious about his own sobriety.

Q. Did you know the Alano Club?

A. Yes, when it was on Grant Avenue. It was near the pagoda gate. It was funky and kind of greasy because they cooked there. It had been an interesting place, part hotel, part brothel. It was so well located, people could come from the financial district, from South of Market. They could get a meal and there were meetings and dances. I think the orchestra was the Dry Notes. Live music. Then they had a fire. There was so much grease around, no wonder it caught on fire. [laughter] It's like anything with older people and memories, it always seems better when you were young. But I suppose it's great right now, too. When I've been to the Alano Club [on Market Street] in San Francisco, I pick up on that same

thing again. There are people there, just dropping in, getting something to eat, going to a meeting. So it hasn't changed that much.

Q. Do you go to meetings now?

A. I go to two or three meetings a week even now and sometimes a newcomer says something I never would have thought of and it just amazes me. I also don't ever want to be back there again. That's why meetings are so important. I don't think alcoholics have a corner on all this angst. But I think we're lucky we're given an opportunity to change. We're all human and some of us deal with life better than others. And alcohol poured on top of it makes it tough. Sometimes I'm cautious about saying we're different. I think we're just in trouble. And we drank too much. 



BACK FROM THE MOUNTAIN TOP: 2008 POST-CONFERENCE ASSEMBLY

by Michael G.

Faithful Fivers are A.A. members who graciously pledge to contribute at least \$5.00 each month toward the support of Central Office. 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:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Alejandro D. | Jeff B. |
| Ami Joy Y. | Jim H. |
| Ann & Denise | Judi C. |
| Barbara M. | Karen K. |
| Bruce D. | Kathleen C. |
| Caroline A. | Lauren H. |
| Casey L. | Leo H. |
| Catherine S. | Lisa M. |
| Celia H. | Liz & Aiden D. |
| Dan & Sherry T. | Margarite S. |
| David J. | Marty C. |
| David P. | Mary F. |
| Dennis & Lucy O. | Michael W. |
| Donald Ray N. | Pat P. |
| Doug C. | Paul W. |
| Elizabeth S. | Peg L. |
| Esther R. | Pene P. |
| Fay K. | Robert W. |
| Frances L. | Sheila H. |
| Giles H. | Steve A. |
| Greg S. | Steve F. |
| Greg W. | Stu S. |
| Herman B. | Sylvia D. |
| Jane K. | Tim M. |
| Janet B. | Tom M. |
| Jeanne C. | |

If you would like to become a Faithful Fiver, please download a pledge form from our website or call or stop by Central Office! You will receive a complimentary subscription to *The Point*. And remember, individual contributions are 100% tax deductible!



Our Area holds four assemblies each year. The most recent was the Post-Conference Assembly. It is highly attended because our Area Delegate reports on the annual General Service Conference. The annual General Service Conference, held in New York City every April, is "a method by which A.A.'s collective group conscience can speak forcefully and put its desires for Conference-wide services into effect. It is the structure that takes the place of government in A.A., ensuring that the full voice of A.A. will be heard and guaranteeing that the desired services will continue to function under all conditions." (The AA Service Manual, p. S-15) Two of our local members share about that with you—here and in "Alcoholics Anonymous Remains Safe from Change" on p. 11.

On May 17, 2008, California Northern Coastal Area 06 (CNCA) held its annual Post-Conference Assembly in Lakeport where Sharon B., our current delegate, described in vivid detail to over 300 members of the fellowship her experiences representing our area at the 58th Annual General Service Conference. As with all CNCA assemblies, participation was made more accessible through simultaneous English to Spanish and Spanish to English translation. Additionally, American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation was provided for the delegate's report. For many General Service Representatives (GSRs), this is the most highly anticipated assembly of the four held an-

nually in CNCA, as it almost brings full circle Alcoholics Anonymous' never-ending conference process. Once the GSRs have reported back to their groups on the assembly, the circle will be completed.

The assembly began with a thoughtful and informative orientation provided by Tom M., former Alcoholics Anonymous Class B Trustee. [Class A trustees are non-alcoholics; Class B are alcoholics.—Ed.] He offered insightful experience and historical context related to the development of the conference. Tom opened his talk by posing the question: "Whose idea (for the conference) was it anyway?" His tongue-in-cheek answer: "Probably not 1 of the 10,000 A.A. members who told me that all I needed to know was in the first 164 pages of the Big Book." If Bill W. thought everything we needed to know was in "the first 164 pages," Tom doubts that Bill would have written, for example, *A.A. Comes of Age* and *The Twelve and Twelve*.

After the orientation, the CNCA assembly business meeting was held. Highlights include:

Bridging the Gap had over 700 requests for help during this two-year panel and gave over 120 presentations to a variety of treatment and correctional facilities.

The Interpretation and Translation Committee Chair reported that the Area Committee recently decided to provide simultaneous English to Spanish translation for all the work-

(Continued on page 14)

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS REMAINS SAFE FROM CHANGE

by Rich H.

I recently heard Sharon B., our Area Delegate to the 58th Annual General Service Conference held in New York City, give her conference Report. She reminded us that the actual process of changing any aspect of the operations of the Board of A.A., the Grapevine, or the pamphlets and books published by those entities, is based primarily on the collective group consciences of the A.A. groups that participate in General Service, pointing out quite clearly that General Service is a critical function of our fellowship.


Over 90 A.A. districts conduct Pre- and Post-Conference Assemblies every year, to listen to the concerns and suggestions of thousands of individual A.A. groups. At the Pre-Conference Assembly (ours was sev-

eral weeks ago), every General Service Representative (GSR; each A.A. group should have one) is given time to present points of view from the respective group, usually along the lines of "for or against." After a given topic is voted upon, an individual GSR may still present a responsible opposing viewpoint, ensuring that a strong "last look" is applied to every topic. At the actual conference, several topics selected by the national assemblies are selected for further action, and once again the same presentation and voting practice is exercised.

So this year the national conference determined that:

- The pamphlet "44 Questions" will not be re-named to "FAQ";


- "A Letter to the Woman Alcoholic" will not be brought back;
- A new poster regarding teenage alcohol abuse will be developed for use in guidance counselors' offices;
- The gray-shaded part of "The Grapevine," regarding a medical view of alcoholism, will remain; and
- Font size in the "Grapevine" will not be changed.

Finally, the Conference decided not to take up the issue of whether alcoholics can serve as Chair of the Board of Directors of Alcoholics Anonymous. 

(A Step Beyond: continued from page 9)

Three were Baha'i and a man named Chuck who had started the meeting. Chuck said he was not a Baha'i, but he was sympathetic to their beliefs. This seemed to bridge any questions she had about having religion affiliations with A.A. Marilyn's husband passed away, but she continues as the meeting treasurer.

Paul R. arrived during that first year, twenty-three years ago, and liked it so much he called his sponsor, Larry, to come along with him. They've been attending together ever since, with occasional fellowship at a favorite restaurant afterwards. Paul has since moved to the East Bay but still gets together with Larry for their Thursday evening connection.

When first conceived, this meeting was called The Step Beyond but it got lost toward the end of the alphabetical listing. They changed the name to A Step Beyond, and it occupied the first listing place in the directory for many years. Parking along Valencia is more available closer to Market, and the 26-Valencia bus runs right in front of the building. All are welcome to this informative 6:00 p.m. meeting. 

Recent Deaths

Mid-Morning Support: Linda Rose D.
Peninsula Fellowship: Laurie S.

We print the names of any members who have recently died when the names have been sent to us. Unlike the **Ongoing Memorials** section, which appears on Page 4, **Recent Deaths** is for information only. This one-time listing is not dependent upon a contribution in the name of the deceased.

GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS

APRIL

2008

Fellowship	Apr	YTD	Fellowship	Apr.	YTD	Fellowship	Apr.	YTD
Artists & Writers F 630pm		1190	On Awakening 7D 530am	490		Artists & Writers F 630pm		138
Brisbane Breakfast Bunch	38	122	Primary Purpose W 830pm	33		As Bill Sees It Sat 11am		142
Contribution Box	58	210	Reveille 5D 7am	100		As Bill Sees It Sat 8pm		211
Deer Park Discovery Group		25	Rise N Shine Sun 10am	183	183	As Bill Sees It Th 6pm		407
IFB	86	359	Sisters In Sobriety Th 730pm (M)	340		As Bill Sees It Tu 1210pm		408
Marin City Groups 5D 630pm	200	200	Spiritual Testost. Su 830a	315		As We Understood Him Mon. 7pm		13
Marin Teleservice		997	Steps To The Solution W 715pm	113		Ass in a Bag Th 830pm		253
Santa Rosa Fellowship		10	Sunday Express Sun 6pm	200		Beginners' Step Study Sat 630pm		42
Serenity House	150	300	Sunlight of the Spirit Th 7pm	48		Beginner's Warmup W 6pm		73
SF Alano Club		10	Survivors M 12pm	50		Bernal Big Book Sat 5pm		362
Spirit of San Francisco		168	T.G.I.F. F 6pm	115	115	Bernal New Day 7D	194	731
Total Fellowship	533	3591	T. G. I. Tuesday 6pm	39		Big Book Basics F 8pm	116	220
Marin Group Contributions			Terra Linda Group Th 830pm	683	683	Big Book Study Su 1130am		232
			Terra Linda Men's Stag Th 8pm	326	904	Bookenders Mon 10am		126
			The Barnyard Group Sa 4pm		94	Came to Believe M 830am		38
Attitude Adjustment 7D 7am	750	1250	The Fearless Searchers F 8pm	38		Came To Believe Su 830am		36
Aware/Accept M 1030am		160	Thursday Night Book Club Th 7pm	114		Show Of Shows W 8pm		784
Blackie's Pasture Sa 830pm	57	222	Thursday Night Speaker Th 830pm	1748	1748	Castro Big Book M 830pm		60
Caledonia Sun 8pm	500	500	Tiburon Beg. Tu 7pm & 830pm	281	281	Cocoanuts Su 9am		35
Candlelight Sun 830pm		50	Tiburon Big Book Group W 730pm	113		Code Blue W 7pm	174	308
Wo. Step Tu 330pm	95	202	Tiburon Haven Sun 12pm	100	400	Courtside Tu 1215pm		103
Creekside New Sun 7pm	70	70	Tuesday Chip Meeting Tu 8pm	1157		Creative Alcoholics M 6pm		152
Crossroads Sun 12pm		316	Tuesday Twelve Step Tu 630pm	38		Each Day a New F 7am	407	1541
Design For Living W 7pm		75	We, Us and Ours M 650pm	50		Each Day a New M 7am		130
Downtown Mill Valley F 830pm	214	389	Wed. Night Speaker 7pm	114		Each Day A New Su 8am		540
Experience, Strength Sa 6pm	96	96	What's It All About F 12pm	150		Each Day a New Th 7am		103
Freedom Finders F 830pm		620	Women For Women W 12pm	50		Each Day a New Tu 7am		215
Friday Night Book F 830pm		130	Women's Meeting Su 430pm	27		Each Day a New W 7am	125	243
Happy Hour (Marin) Th 6pm	96	96	Working Dogs W 1205pm	225		Early Start F 6pm		919
Happy, Joyous & Free 5D 12pm	750	750	Total Marin Group Contributions	\$7,092	\$16,541	Easy Does It Tu 6pm		120
Hillside Candlelight F 830pm		57	SF Group Contributions			Embarcadero Group 5D 1210pm	67	148
Intimate Feelings Sa 10am	113	210	6am Marina Dock M			Epiphany Group Th 8pm		39
Island Group Th 8pm		160	6am Marina Dock Sa	136	305	Eureka Valley Topic M 6pm		729
Living in the Solution F 6pm		324	6am Marina Dock Tu		32	Excelsior Free for All Sa 8pm		50
Marin City Groups 5D 630pm		350	6am Marina Dock W		25	Federal Speaker Su 12pm		354
Men Only Stag Sa 6pm		20	7am As Bill Sees It Fri		24	Firefighters & Friends Tu 10am		96
Monday Blues M 630pm	240	240	7am Grab Bag M 7am	18	102	Friday All Groups F 830pm		861
M. Night Meeting 8pm	125	125	7am Marina Dock		7	Friday Knights Th 730am	50	50
Monday Night Women's M 8pm	78	78	7am Step Discussion Tu 7am		29	Friday Lunchtime Step F 12pm	140	140
Monday Nooners M 12pm	275	275	A is for Alcohol Tu 6pm	34	34	Friday Night Special F 830pm	20	20
More Will Be Revealed F 12pm		100	A Vision for You (SF) Su 630pm		40	Friday Smokeless F 830pm		36
Morning Attitude MTuF 7am		228	AA Step Study Su 6pm		307	Friendly Circle Su 715pm		176
Nativity Big Book M 8pm	100	100	Acceptance Group M 530pm	15	43	Gold Mine Group M 8pm		38
Newcomers Step M 730pm		482	Afro American Beginners Sat 8pm	30	82	Golden Gate Seniors Tu 130pm		48
Noon Discussion Th 12pm		214	All Together Now Th 8pm		150	Goodlands Su 2pm		150
Noon Tu 12pm	99	99	Any Lengths Sat 930am	575	763	Haight St Explorers Th 630pm		51
Noon Hope F 12pm		215				Happy Destiny Sa 630pm		26
North Marin Speaker Sun 12pm		130				Happy Hour (S.F.) Th 6pm		36

GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS, CON'T

Fellowship	Apr	YTD	Fellowship	Apr.	YTD	Fellowship	Apr.	YTD
Happy Hour Ladies F 530pm		61	Park Presidio M 830pm	100	100	Sunset 11'ers W		66
High Noon 5D 1215pm		32	Pax West M 12pm		518	Sunset 9'ers M		202
High Noon Friday 1215pm	158	385	Pax West Th 12pm		501	Sunset SpkStep Sun 730pm		338
High Noon Monday 1215pm	210	390	Progress Not...Tu 830pm		103	Sutter Street Sat 6pm	344	344
High Noon Saturday 1215pm		253	Queers, Crackpots &		78	The Drive Thru W 1215pm		270
High Noon Thursday 1215pm	308	961	Rebound W 830pm		144	They Stopped In Time M 8pm		220
High Noon Tuesday 1215pm	201	300	Easy Does It Sa 12pm		360	Th Morn Men's BB Study 6am		14
High Noon Wednesday 1215pm	92	237	Serenity House Sat 830pm		450	Th Night Wo Th 630pm		204
High Steppers W 7pm		15	Sinbar Su 830pm		282	Too Early Sat 8am	279	803
Home Group Sat 830pm		316	Sisters Circle Su 6pm	71	223	Tuesday Downtown Tu 8pm		175
Huntington Square W 630pm	213	513	Sober & Centered F 7pm		140	Tuesday Women's Tu 630pm		122
Join the Tribe Tu 7pm		507	Sober Across... M-Sa 830am	35	80	Tuesday's Daily Ref.. Tu 7am		92
Keep Coming Back Sa 11am		1394	Sobriety & Beyond W 7pm		202	12 Steps to Happiness F 730pm		72
Lincoln Park Sat 830pm		269	Sometimes Slowly Sa 11am		279	Valencia Smokefree F 6pm	80	454
Living Sober W 8pm		57	Sought to Improve Th 730pm		110	Walk of Shame W 8pm		253
Living Sober with HIV W 6pm		278	Step Sisters (S.F.) Th 630pm		20	Washington Square M 7pm	20	20
Luke's Group W 8pm		60	Step Talk Su 830am		298	Waterfront Sun 8pm	478	1020
Lush Lounge Sa 2pm		321	Stepping Out Sat 6pm		100	We Care Tu 12pm	150	150
Meeting Place Noon F 12pm		281	Steppin' Up Tu 630pm	128	128	West Portal W 830pm		44
Mid-Morning Support Su 1030am		346	Stonestown M 8pm		154	Wharfrats Th 815pm		71
Miracles Off 24th St W 730pm		146	Straight Jackets Th 9am	32	52	Women Living Sober Sa 10am	120	120
Mission Terrace W 8pm		401	Sunday Bookworms Sun 730pm		78	Women Who Drank.. Tu 615pm		7
Monday Monday M 1215pm	78	167	Sunday Gay Men's Stag 930am	291	291	Women's 10 Yr... Th 615pm		85
New Friday Big Book F 12pm		31	Sunday Night 3rd Step Group 5pm		210	Women's Promises F 7pm		124
New Life W 7pm		220	Sunday Night Castro 8pm		309	Work In Progress Sat 7pm		56
Newcomers Tu 8pm		258	Sunday Rap Sun 8pm		120	YAHOO Step Sa 11am		100
No Reservation M 12pm		167	Sundown Steps Th 630pm	60	134			
No Whiners F 7pm	28	48	Sunset 11'ers F	80	80	Total SF Group Contributions	\$5,725	\$33,355
Noon Smokeless F 12pm	71	103	Sunset 11'ers M		80			
One, Two, Three, Go! W 1pm		20	Sunset 11'ers Th		40	Total Group Contributions	\$13,350	\$53,486

EDITORIAL POLICY

The Point is published monthly to inform A.A. members about business and meeting affairs of the Inter-county Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in San Francisco and Marin counties.

In addition, *The Point* publishes original feature articles submitted by local A.A. members that reflect the full diversity of experience and opinion found within the fellowship of

Alcoholics Anonymous. No one viewpoint or philosophy dominates its pages, and in determining the editorial content, the editors rely on the principles of the Twelve Traditions.

(This is a brief summary of the editorial policy of *The Point*.) For the Long Form, please go to the Central Office website—www.aasf.org.

SECRETARIES AND TREASURERS!

You can now register with Central Office on our website:
www.aasf.org.

Please do so to receive your group's complimentary copies of *The Point* for the duration of your commitment so you may share important information with your group!

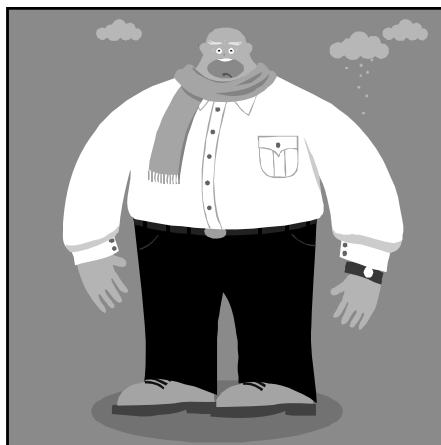
MEETING DISRUPTIONS

by Harry M.

My sponsor and I were discussing meeting disruptions past, present and future the other day. He brought up one example from around 20 years ago where a certain fellow (who shall be nameless) was having great difficulty staying sober and decided everyone else should share in his difficulties rather than him sharing in the group's solutions. He would show up drunk at meetings and insist on sharing. Several times he would disrupt proceedings and would have to be "escorted" out, always with a resounding shout from all of "Keep coming back!" Well, he finally did get sober and is a regular member of San Francisco A.A. today.

We don't have as many "active" members showing up at meetings these days, what with treatment programs, judges, etc., but it can be a problem for newer folks who are secretaries

about how to handle someone who is disruptive. Many think that we should never ask someone to leave a meeting, thinking that we are condemning them to death or worse. Others



would have us behave like good little tin soldiers and never ever cuss, or become emotional, or act up in a meeting. I think that the best guide we can use in these cases is found in

the Traditions. The First Tradition states that "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity." This means that we don't allow disruptive members to hold the group hostage nor jeopardize groups' relations with the organizations we rent meeting spaces from. The group conscience comes into play here. Even though "our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern," there is still a responsibility to other members of the group to insure that meetings are safe places for recovery. I remember once in the early 1980's at a meeting at the old Pierce and Clay location, one of our "difficult" members, who obviously had problems other than alcoholism, decided to pull a knife on someone he thought was a threat to him somehow. The group conscience reacted immediately with several

(Continued on page 17)

(Back from the Mountain :continued from page 10) shops offered at future summer assemblies.

The business meeting was followed by three stirring presentations based on the conference theme: "Communication and Participation—The Key to Unity and Self-Support." The first presentation likened communication and participation to "the fuel that propels us into the fourth dimension of existence." The second presentation, on Unity, discussed Concept IV's "right of participation," the Seventh Tradition's "self-support," and "gratitude in action." The third presentation on self-support opened with the complex topic of "the benefits and liabilities,

both spiritual and practical, of funding our General Service Office solely by the voluntary contributions of A.A. members and A.A. groups; that profits from literature sales will no longer be used to fund our General Service Office." Each of the carefully crafted and well thought out presentations provided us with a platform for spiritual growth as we reflected on our own personal experiences related to these topics.

Sharon's highly anticipated Delegate's Report was next on the assembly agenda. [See the related article in this issue of *The Point* about the report itself.] The room was markedly quiet as we listened with rapt attention while Sharon shared in careful

detail her mountain top experience of representing the area at the conference. Early on in Sharon's report, she told us that she wished she could have taken each and every one of us along with her to the conference. Sharon's report did just that. It brought us along with her in service to the conference. After our journey to the conference, there was time for questions and answers. Many folks asked specific questions related to the agenda topics they had discussed with their groups.

Lastly, we had the "what's on your mind" portion of the assembly followed by the closing prayer. It was with deep gratitude we all served our fellowship. **P**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

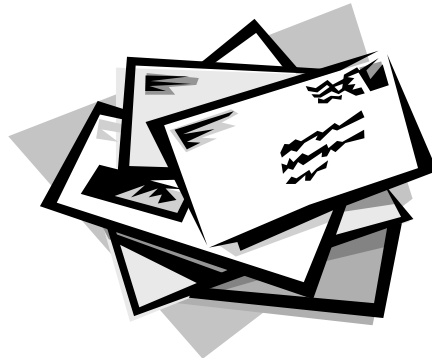
To the Editor:

First of all, *The Point* is looking and sounding better all the time and is another great resource for the newcomer. As a former committee member and contributor, I know the effort that goes into this newsletter and truly admire your commitment.

So I feel bad complaining about something that appeared in the May issue—but I cringed when I read “The Bulletin Board: Twelve Differences Between Your Sponsor and Your Therapist.” Its message and tone is insulting to the credibility of A.A.—and comes off like Tom Cruise jumping up and down on Oprah’s couch with his Scientology rant. It denigrates the profession of psychology with the same kind of simple-minded rhetoric. If I were a newcomer with an IQ higher than a toaster, I would be long gone.

The comparison between a sponsor and a therapist is horrendously misleading. These are two separate and completely different functions—one dealing with the psyche and the other with the spirit. I have seen more abuses from A.A. “sponsors” over the years than from therapists. It would be more responsible for *The Point* to emphasize that an A.A. sponsor is NOT A THERAPIST. Nor do they give medical advice, religious consultation, dietary suggestions, financial planning or psychological evaluations. We may as well have listened to our bartenders when it comes to those subjects. A good sponsor walks you through the steps.

Many of us in A.A. do suffer from other emotional and mental disorders. Many of us did come from negligent or abusive families. We have damaged people in our rooms, recovering from



alcoholism. A good psychologist can identify issues and can provide healthy guidance for the psyche and mind. A good sponsor, on the other hand, teaches acceptance and responsibility—through the twelve steps—to live life without alcohol or other drugs—on life’s terms, whether you are a damaged person or not.

Maybe what your writer was really trying to describe is the one big difference between therapy without recovery and therapy with recovery. When true Twelve-Step recovery is happening—it actually works.

I beg you to print a retraction to this awful piece. This stuff drives people AWAY and is just not worth it.

Thanks for listening,

Jean M.

To the Editor:

Thanks for stepping in and taking the new editors position.

Enjoyed Jean's and Harry's stories [in the May issue] very much. Good job of linking topic with the holidays. After reading your introduction in the "From the Editor" and the Editorial Policy, I decided to go ahead and make a couple of comments.

Since the editors rely on the principles of the Twelve Traditions (that we all have our opinions on), I don't think it hurts to hear others' perceptions. Hearing others' views has expanded my understanding of how the traditions keep us united.

I don't think the article "Review of Amy Winehouse's 'Rehab'" has a place in *The Point*. It seems obvious to me why. Also, in "Twelve Differences between Your Sponsor and Your Therapist," I hate to see this kind of bashing of therapy. I know it was done for humor, but I am a strong advocate for therapy for the alcoholic. Humor is used to hide so much hate and prejudice. A disclaimer that A.A. has no opinion on therapy for the alcoholic might have been appropriate. Just another bozo on the bus,

Ted R.

Dear Editor:

Thanks for the recent article on self-support [cover story, May 2008].

Our Pacific Region Trustee, Madeleine, reported in March that the General Service Office (GSO) in New York City requires 54 cents per month per A.A. member in the United States and Canada to be self-supporting by A.A. members. However, GSO only receives what amounts to 35 cents per A.A. member per month.

Why is A.A. not flat broke? The answer is literature sales. Does this matter? That depends on one's perspective. GSO in New York (for USA/Canada) sold over a million Big Books in 2006 alone. There are approximately 2 mil-

(Continued on page 18)

IFB MEETING SUMMARY — JUNE '08

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.	Living Sober With HIV	P	Greg W.	High Noon (Thursday)	R	Olive G.	Steppin Up	P
Allyn J.	Fireside Chat	A**	Jackie B.	Sisters Circle	A*	Patrick M.	Treasurer	A*
Andy D.	Gratitude Group	A*	Jackie S.	Marina Discussion	A*	Patty M.	Huntington Square	P
Andy T.	Waterfront	A*	Jaime G.	Sesame Step	P	Pete R.	Artist and Writers	A*
Armando R.	Home Group	A*	Jeff G.	High Noon (Saturday)	A*	Peter G.	Sunday Night Castro	A**
Barbara H.	All Together Now	A**	Judy S.	Diamond Heights Group	A*	Rebecca D.	Valencia Smokefree	P
Brad P.	Code Blue	P	Julio B.	Blue Book Special	A*	Rich H.	Mid-Morning Support	A*
Bruce K.	Sunset Speaker Step	P	Karen A.	West Portal	P	Richard R.	We Care	P
Carol E.	Happy Hour	A*	Karin K.	24 Hour Plan	A**	Rick K.	Join the Tribe	P
Christopher R.	7AM Mill Valley Log Cabin	A**	Kate E.	7AM Attitude Adjustment	P	Sam S.	Early Start	A*
Charles S.	Surf Group	P	Ken J.	High Sobriety	P	Scott N.	Sunset 11'ers Sat	A*
Chuck K.	IFB Chair	P	Ken M.	Sober Across the Board	R	Shellie W.	Bernal New Day	P
Dana R.	Saturday Sunset 9'ers	A*	Larry B.	Castro Discussion	A*	Steve N.	Terra Linda Group	P
David A.	Goldmine Group	P	Lydia B.	Walk Of Shame	A**	Stu S.	Tuesday Newcomers	P
David D.	Keep It Simple	P	Matthew D.	Too Early	P	Ted R.	Tiburon Men's Stag	P
Del C.	Spiritual Testosterone	A**	Matt T.	Sunday Night Friendship	P	Tedra M.	Come N Get It	A*
Derek A.	Wharf Rats	P	Maury P.	Central Office Manager	P	Thomas H.	Any Lengths	A*
Derek D.	Reality Farm	A*	Michael B.	One Liners	A**	Tom K.	High Noon (Monday)	P
Edward H.	High Noon (Tuesday)	A*	Michael B.	SFPOA	P	Tracy F.	Keep Coming Back	P
Elizabeth B.	Sober 5150's	P	Michael M.	As Bill Sees It (Emb)	P	Tracy G.	Wit's End	A**
Erica R.	Miracles On 24th St	P	Michael P.	Sunset 9'ers (Sunday)	P	Victor V.	Creative Alcoholics	P
Faye K.	Queers, Crackpots, Fallen. . .	A**	Nathan M.	Saturday Easy Does It	P	Virginia M.	Women Who Drank. . .	A*
Gilbert G.	Ten Years After	A*	Nicholas L.	Some Are Sicker Than...	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	Group	Visitors	Liaisons
None		John	Allen Y. Marin H&I Karen S. District 06 Ray M. District 05

Following in an unofficial summary of actions, information, upcoming business and service opportunities discussed at the June IFB meeting. It is provided for your convenience and it is not intended to be the completed approved minutes. For a complete copy of the minutes, contact the Central Office.

IFB Reports

Chair's Report: Chuck K. had nothing to add to the report he presented at the Annual Meeting:

Treasurer's Report: For the month of April, the Net Income was \$3,867 which

was \$3,600 above the budgeted net income of \$267. The favorable result in April was due to higher group and individual contributions, and lower employee expenses. For YTD through April, net income was \$18,151 which is \$14,463 better than budget. The favorable result for YTD is due to lower expenses than budget. Approximately \$3,600 of the favorable net income is due to timing of expenses (budgeted but not yet incurred).

Total Income for the month of April was \$481 above budget. Group contributions were \$1,369 better than budget and individual contributions were \$874 better than

budget. Those favorable variances were offset by lower bookstore sales which were \$1,967 less than budget. Bookstore sales were \$7,845 and \$37,253 for the month and YTD respectively. The profit margin on books sold was \$2,673 (34%) and \$13,235 (36%) YTD.

Faithful Fiver contributions continue to be below budget for the fourth month in a row. Those contributions for April were \$147 below budget (20%) and \$2,220 (57%) YTD. Fortunately, honorary contributions have offset the decrease in Faithful Fivers.

Total expenses for the month of April were
(Continued on page 17)

(Continued from page 16)

\$1,949 lower than budget, primarily due to lower employee expenses. YTD through April, total expenses were \$13,496 below budget of which employee expenses accounted for \$9,604 of savings, and timing accounted for another \$3,600. The lower employee expenses were due to the Central Office Manager being on disability leave. That leave ended at the end of April.

Central Office Manager's Report: Central Office is in need of volunteers to answer the phones in the office during the summer as people are taking vacations.

Central Office Committee Report: The highlights of the May COC meeting included: hearing and discussing the Central Office Manager's and Treasurer's reports, discussing the delivery of committee reports at IFB meetings, and the agreement to withdraw our support of the first proposed Bylaws change currently before the IFB along with the decision to make an alternate recommendation regarding the language we use on our printed schedule.

Third Presentation of Bylaws

Changes: Bylaw changes were read for the third time followed by discussion on the proposed amendments and on what procedure to follow in regards to when and how to vote on them. The first two proposed Bylaws change were voted on and failed. Chuck K. asked that the discussion and voting on the remaining amendments be tabled due to the time. A motion was called to table the discussion and vote of the additional proposals. It was seconded and passed unanimously.

Nominating Committee: Chuck K. announced the activation of the Nominating Committee and explained the protocol and responsibilities of the committee. Four members volunteered to serve.

Polling for the COC: The members present were polled for availability to be considered by the Nominating Committee to stand for election to the COC.

IFB Liaison Reports: In the interest of time, only reports not given at the Annual Meeting were presented:

General Service, SF: A written report was presented. The topics discussed and voted on by the Annual General Service Conference were:

- 1) The pamphlet "44 Questions" will not be re-named to "FAQ".
- 2) "A Letter to the Woman Alcoholic" will not be brought back.
- 3) A new poster regarding teenage alcohol abuse will be developed for use in guidance counselor's offices.
- 4) The grey-shaded part of "The Grapevine", regarding a medical view of alcoholism will remain, and
- 5) Font size in "The Grapevine" will not be changed.

Living Sober: Alejandro D. gave the report. The up-coming conference will be July 4th-6th, at the Grand Hyatt hotel in downtown SF. Anyone may contact Central Office for details or referrals to the appropriate people.

Committee Reports

In the interest of time, only reports not given at the Annual Meeting were presented:

Fellowship Committee: Rebecca D-S. gave the report on the up-coming Founders' Day Event.

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and unanimously passed. The meeting ended at 8:50PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken J, Secretary

The next IFB meeting is on Wednesday, July 2nd, 2008 at 1187 Franklin Street in San Francisco at 7:00 p.m. Orientation starts at 6:00 p.m. and is required for all new members.

If your group does not have an elected Intergroup Representative, also known as an IFB Rep., please join us to see if it is a service position for you.

The IFB is the policy-making group for your Central Office and a good resource for questions or problems related to groups in San Francisco and Marin. It serves as the Board of Directors for the Central Office, a legal requirement for any California non-profit corporation.

(Meeting Disruptions, Continued from page 14)


members swarming the guy, taking his knife away and holding him down until the police arrived.

That's a little dramatic but effective. In many cases, a gentler approach can be used: the secretary might thank the individual for sharing (after a reasonable amount of time) and explain that others need to be allowed to speak now. Another approach that I have used is to gently

ask to talk to the individual outside, go out with them, and listen to what they have to say for the rest of the meeting. This allows the meeting to continue without interruption and also gives me a chance to be grateful I'm not as hurting as the individual I'm talking to.

I think the point here is that, as it states at the end of Step Twelve in the *Twelve and Twelve*, "we are problem people who have found a way up

and out." Sometimes some of us follow the "way" and some of us don't. It's always a toss-up how any one of us is going to react on any particular day. Hopefully, a balance can be met among love and tolerance and enabling.

In the end, "for our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority, a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience." 

(Letters to the Editor, continued from page 15)
 lion A.A. members in the entire world. Nobody really knows how much of our literature is purchased by A.A. members. But it's clear the money from A.A. literature sales doesn't come from the Seventh Tradition.


There are various philosophical, spiritual, and practical arguments around whether we should support ourselves via voluntary contributions. Just one example: we group members may exercise our ultimate authority over A.A. World Services via the "power of the purse." One may argue that if our Seventh Tradition contributions decrease relative to revenue obtained from literature sales, our authority also decreases.

I was pleased to see that "self-support" for both GSO and the A.A. Grapevine were agenda topics for the 2008 annual General Service Conference. I expect to see these topics on the agenda for future General Service Conferences. Money often spurs much loving discussion among members of A.A. The Conference needs to hear from groups on these topics at least as much as, if not more than, from trustees and GSO staff.

I've been encouraged by my mentors in A.A. service not to shy away from the topic of money in A.A. Like it or not, A.A. needs it to survive. I understand that many members may only be able to put a quarter or a nickel in the basket. One member's nickel is as spiritually significant as another's dollar bill. For me, when I look at what I'm willing to spend on fancy coffees, pastries, mobile phones, and entertainment, I ask myself whether five dollars is enough for me to throw in the basket. I feel that I should occasionally skip that musical concert, for example, so I have a lit-

tle extra money in my pocket for A.A. I would spend more on drinking if I were to relapse than five dollars per meeting, and that's not counting DUI's.

I enjoyed hearing the many ideas that A.A. groups in our area shared this year around self-support [at the conference]. Continuing to lovingly discuss this with an open mind will be healthy for A.A. as a whole, and allow us to grow individually and collectively.

Jeff O. 

WRITE TO THE POINT!

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thepoint@aaaf.org.

Cunning, Baffling and Puzzlefut

Find each of the following words, which relate to the Seventh Step, Tradition or Concept. Words may appear forward, backward, horizontally, vertically or diagonally.

SHORTCOMINGS
 HUMBLLY
 GROUP
 FULLY

ASKED
 DECLINING
 EFFECTIVENESS
 REMOVE

LEGAL
 MANAGE
 OUTSIDE
 INSTRUMENTS

C M I N S T R U M E N T S E D S M I N R G N D N
 F I M C M R S G E O D E T L L I T G R N S E C I
 L D L I P Y F P S A G C S B R L R L I S D N T Y
 O P N A S L L O E R A S L M R G E M H I O L N E
 I H E F T B Y S E E N C I U R S O T T C S H I F
 L I E I O M E N U S F A K H T C S O G Y K U L T
 E S D M E U P S M I S P M K T U U T L R I M C M
 U E I M P H E M D S O L N R I F E U E R O L E L
 E N S R G E O E E U O D O H F F F I H E G U D I
 G E T A M O K I R V I H C P O E S M U M R O P N
 N V U U R S D G S S S G G B U C Y S L E G A L R
 L I O E A D E O E D N I M S M T D H A G A F A O
 R T O M F U G K R I S G N I N I L C O D O S S S
 P C I G A N A M N C I T R O S V E E E O S T U M
 U E T O E N N I Y L L U F T G E D R G R O S N R
 M F S E O N L M S I M E U E E N R M G E L N E M
 U F A L E C T E N L R O I G N E T T L G O S O P
 P E I I E S R T L L K M A G K S D E R S P L N E
 K L O D S H E E N L D N S F U S M O E B O U M C
 O M H N T D L E O M A A S S I O H O M T R G N N
 F U Y I I A K E D M A I S H O R T C O M I N G S
 B R A S M L I N S T R U M E N F N N V T M R P S
 G R E S S E N E V I T C E F F E E I E E E E O S
 R A T N C E A P L L C E A C K U F R K L S S S S

Financial Statement

April 2008

	Apr 08	Jan - Apr 08
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Contributions from Groups		
Group Contributions	13281	52148
Honors	69	155
Contributions from Groups - Other	0	1201
Total Contributions from Groups	\$13,350	\$53,504
Contributions from Individuals		
Individual - Unrestricted	1871	3855
Faithful Fiver	580	1695
Honorary Contributions	90	4465
Total Contributions from Individuals	\$2,541	\$10,015
Gratitude Month		
Gratitude Month - Groups	441	3611
Gratitude Month - Individual	0	154
Total Gratitude Month	441	3765
Sales - Bookstore	7845	37253
Newsletter Subscript.	119	318
Total Income	\$24,296	\$104,855
Cost of Goods Sold		
Cost of Books Sold	4966	23336
Credit Card Processing Fees	207	682
Total COGS	\$5,172	\$24,018
Gross Profit	19123	80837
Expense		
IFB Sponsored Events	275	275
Unreconciled Bank Adj	0	-150
Special Events Expense	0	13
Employee Expenses		
Wages & Salaries	6974	27162
Employer Tax Expenses	717	3545
Health Benefits	1274	3791
Total Employee Expenses	\$8,966	\$34,498
Professional Fees		
Computer Consulting	800	969
Total Professional Fees	800	969
Bank Charges	20	73
Postage		
Bulk Mail	0	550
Postage - Other	\$0	\$264
Total Postage	0	814
Rent - Office	4147	16586
Rent - Other	0	300
Access Expenses	0	375
Insurance	0	1824
Internet Expense	55	220

	Apr 08	Jan - Apr 08
Office Supplies	0	840
Shipping	77	113
Equipment Lease	0	1804
Repair & Maintenance	328	2106
Security System	34	134
Telephone	308	1148
Phone Book Listings	82	326
Bad Checks	59	66
Miscellaneous Expense	0	0
Total Expense	\$15,149	\$62,334
Net Ordinary Income	3974	18503
Other Income/Expense		
Other Income		
Interest Income	\$19	\$139
Total Other Income	19	139
Other Expense		
Depreciation Expense	76	303
Amortization Expense	46	184
Total Other Expense	\$122	\$486
Net Other Income	-102	-347
Net Income	\$3,872	\$18,156

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