

# the Point

*The Point is that we are willing  
to grow along spiritual lines.*

from Chapter Five of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous

2009  
**8**  
AUGUST

A publication of the Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous

A publication of the

Intercounty Fellowship

of Alcoholics Anonymous

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The Point is published monthly to inform AA 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 AA members. Nothing published herein should be construed as a statement of AA, nor does publication constitute endorsement of AA as a whole, the Intercounty Fellowship Board, the Central Office, or The Point Editorial Committee. Letters and articles to help carry the AA message are welcomed, subject to editorial review by The Point Committee.

# AUGUST 2009

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
<p><i>Persons requiring reasonable accommodations at meetings of the IFB, COC, IFB committees or service events sponsored by the preceding entities, including ASL interpreters, assistive listening devices or print materials in alternative formats, should contact Central Office (415) 674-1821 no less than five business days prior to the event.</i></p> <div>     </div>				
2	3	<b>4</b> <u>FIRST TUE</u> Access Committee Central Office, 6pm	<b>5</b> <u>FIRST WED</u> Intercounty Fellowship Board IFB Orientation, 6pm, IFB Meeting, 7pm  August Meeting in Marin: St. Andrews Church, 101 Donahue, Marin City	6
9	<b>10</b> <u>SECOND MON</u> Fellowship Committee Central Office, 6pm  SF Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC) Committee Central Office, 7pm	<b>11</b> <u>SECOND TUE</u> <i>The Point</i> Committee Central Office, 5:30pm  Bridging the Gap 1111 O'Farrell St. 6:30pm  Marin H&I 1360 Lincoln, San Rafael, 7:15pm  SF General Service 1111 O'Farrell St., 8pm	<b>12</b> <u>SECOND WED</u> 12th Step Committee Central Office, 6:30pm  Marin Bridging the Gap 1360 Lincoln Ave San Rafael Alano Club, 6:30pm	<b>13</b> <u>SECOND THU</u> Trusted Servants Workshop Committee Central Office, 6pm
<b>16</b> <u>THIRD SUN</u> Archives Committee Central Office, 2pm Business Meeting followed by Work Day	<b>17</b> <u>THIRD MON</u> SF Teleservice Central Office, 6:30pm  Marin General Service 9 Ross Valley Rd, San Rafael, 8pm	18	19	20
<b>23</b> 30	<b>24</b> 31	<b>25</b> <u>FOURTH TUE</u> <i>The Point</i> Committee Central Office, 5:30pm  Marin Teleservice 1360 Lincoln Ave San Rafael Alano Club, 7:30pm	26	<b>27</b> <u>LAST THU</u> SF H&I Old First Church, 1751 Sacramento St. SF Orientation: 7:15pm Committee Meeting: 8pm

FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1
7	8 General Service CNCA Summer Assembly Fortuna, CA Visit <a href="http://www.cnca06.org">www.cnca06.org</a> for more information
14	15
21	22 <u>FOURTH SAT</u> General Service CNCA Meeting 320 N. McDowell Petaluma; Business Meeting: 12:30pm
28	29

California Northern Coastal Area 06  
of the General Service Conference

# The 2009 SUMMER ASSEMBLY

Saturday August 8, 2009  
Riverwalk Lodge, Fortuna, CA



## Featuring Workshops On:

Dogma in A.A, Outreach to Young People,  
Anonymity in the Electronic Age, and More!

**Registration: 8:30-9:30**

**Business Meeting: 10:00-12:00**

**Lunch: 12:00-1:00**

**Workshops: 1:00- 3:45**

**Summary: 4:00-5:00**

**For more detailed information**  
**[www.cnca.org](http://www.cnca.org)**



## Meeting Changes

### New Meetings:

Thu	7:15pm	San Rafael	LESBO THURSDAYS, Marin Alano Club, 1360 Lincoln Ave/Maple St. (WO, LS, SD)
Sat	8:00am	Pt. Reyes Station	MORNING ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT, 6th St./A St. (DI, WH)

### Meeting Changes:

Sun	9:30am	Castro	SUNDAY MORNING GAY MEN'S STAG, Country Club, 4058 18th St. (was 45 Castro St.)
Wed	7:00pm	Nob Hill	NEW LIFE, 1359 Pine St./Larkin St., 6th Floor (was 1700 Jackson St.)
Thu	7:00pm	San Rafael	FOUR HORSEMEN, Church, 1 Wellbrock Hts/Trellis (was 620 Del Ganado Rd., Terra Linda)
Thu	8:00	Western Addition	FIRESIDE CHAT, 1442 Fulton St./Broderick (was 8:30 at 1748 Market St.)

### No Longer Meeting:

Sun	3:45pm	Marina	MARINA, The Dry Dock, 2118 Greenwich St./Fillmore St.
Wed	7:15pm	Hayes Valley	EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH & HOPE, S.F. Alano Club, 1748 Market St./Octavia Blvd.

**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!*

# 2900

## Mission Fellowship

### Anniversary Pot Luck Party

### Saturday, September 12

### 4:30 Fellowship Potluck Party

### 6:00 Meeting and Sobriety Countdown


## 2900 24th Street & Florida

# 2010

## International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous

July 1-4 in San Antonio, Texas

### “A Vision for You.”



The 2010 Convention will be held July 1-4  
in San Antonio, Texas with the theme  
“A Vision for You”

Other meetings, scheduled or informal, will take  
place throughout the weekend in the San Antonio  
Convention Center and local hotels.

*Convention registration and housing reservations will open Fall 2009.  
All registration packets will be included in the registration packet  
which will be available September 2009.*

## From the Editor



# Summer Travel and Service

Here at *The Point*, we have been saving up some remarkable articles over the past year in order to fill our August issue about meetings around the world. Summer suggests travel, of members of our own fellowship to other places, and people from elsewhere to the Bay Area. This issue is a reminder of how geographically far-reaching Alcoholics Anonymous truly is. It may even inspire you to attend meetings while you're on the road—to see how different, yet ultimately the same, A.A. around the world can be.

At Central Office we get far more requests than usual during the summer months for assistance finding meetings by out-of-town visitors. It used to be that people called for help, but more and more, folks are emailing ahead to make plans for meetings in advance of their visit. Volunteers are pitching in to help respond to these emails, in addition to the regular telephone volunteers (always two during business hours) and teleservice folks (who answer the phone when Central Office closes). A.A. is keeping up with the evolution in technology, but we can't

let that live human being at the end of a phone line disappear; one drunk talking to another is still the bottom line. This means that there are always opportunities for service, both phone shifts at Central Office and being available to take calls after hours. If you or someone you know (or sponsor) needs a service commitment, check with Central Office about available shifts.

If you have enjoyed the recently jazzed up look of this publication, then you can thank our newest committee member, Timm S. Timm is the layout person these days, and we appreciate his commitment and ability. We also would like to recognize our new assistant editor, Chris D., who is taking on the job of communicating with our contributors, as well as writing (for example, check out "Cruisin' the High Seas" in this issue).

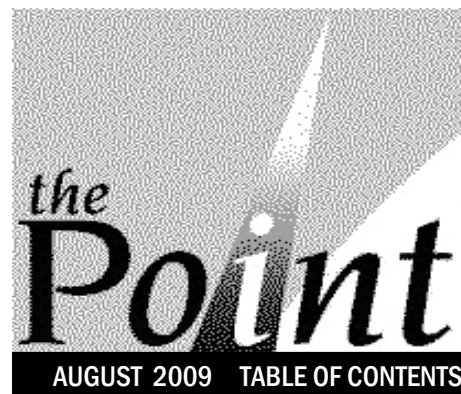
If you have ever thought about writing for *The Point*, just email us at [thepoint@aaaf.org](mailto:thepoint@aaaf.org), and you'll hear back about how to get involved.



## EDITORIAL POLICY

*The Point* is published monthly to inform A.A. members about business and meeting affairs of the Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. 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 summary of the editorial policy of *The Point*. For the full policy, please go to [www.aaaf.org](http://www.aaaf.org).)



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# The Existence of God in the Hall

## *A Japanese Visitor Learns about General Service*

by Tomoko S.

My name is Tomoko, and I am an alcoholic. I live in a small town 70 kilometers south from Tokyo, Japan. I'd like to share my experience of attending PRAASA (Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly) held in Oakland last March, and staying in San Francisco for several days after PRAASA.

My sobriety date is July 2, 2006. In February 2008, I launched a new group in my town with other members because there had been no group there. We have only a few members so we can't elect a GSR and I've never been involved in General Service. One day, my sponsor Doug, who lives in San Jose (I met him when he lived in Japan), recommended that I attend PRAASA to study A.A.'s General Service. I got interested in it

and I decided to follow his suggestion.

PRAASA was beautiful and I was very impressed with it. There were many sessions and speakers made presentations in each one. The topics were various: enthusiasm, literature, self-support, anonymity, remote communities, etc. The speeches were full of gratitude and pleasure and I felt the existence of God in the hall. To be honest, I was afraid to join General

*"I was afraid to join General Service because it seemed to be both bothering and troublesome."*

Service because it seemed to be bothering and troublesome. However, through my experience at PRAASA, I felt sure that commitment to General Service is joyful, if we follow the prin-

ciples of looking for God's will.

After PRAASA, I went down to San Jose, my sponsor's town, and then to San Francisco. I stayed in The City for three days and attended three meetings. The first meeting was a beginner meeting, Tuesday Downtown Beginners. There were about 100 people. It was exciting for me that the secretary read some suggestions for beginners, and that they had Q&A time after the speaker's share. Many beginners asked the speaker questions like "How did you find your sponsor?" "When did you make your first inventory?" and so on. In Japan, there are no meetings for beginners, as far as I know, and I have never seen Q&A in the meetings. In my early sobriety, it took me a long time to learn that I needed to get a sponsor and to take the steps. I wish I had been able to get information from such a beginners meeting; then I could have started my program earlier and maybe could have avoided a slip.

The High Steppers group, the second meeting I went to, was smaller than the first. There were about 10 people. It was a very calm and peaceful step meeting. They welcomed me and let me choose a prayer at the end of the meeting. I chose the Serenity Prayer, which is the only prayer I could say in English. My last meeting was held at 7 in the early morning at First Place at Jones and Ellis St. Afterwards, I departed for Tokyo.

It is surprising for me that hundreds of meetings are held in San Francisco every week in many places, day and night. And it is wonderful that the meetings are bright and the Twelve Steps are treasured everywhere. I'm grateful that I had such happy days in California.



# BULLETIN BOARD

I went to my first few meetings in San Jose while living in Palm Springs. During my tenure with A.A., I have also lived in Sunol, Marietta (Georgia) and Tucson (Arizona). Meeting formats that I recall did not include an Academy Awards list of love, gratitude and praise for those who did a little bit of service work setting up the meeting. I often see seasoned A.A.'s doing these tasks and have wondered if they're just doing it for the pre- and post-meeting recognition. After all, these are chores, I believe, for the newcomer. If these tasks help them stay sober, great; if they go out, we've wasted our meeting time with the intro and closing recognition.

There are also the announcements for birthdays, visitors, new to the meeting, etc. I've only been sober 19 years, but "back in the old days" the only *custom of the group* was to ask for new members to introduce themselves and if

there were any visitors. It kills me when we have to go around the room to introduce ourselves! The only value of this for me is to get the name of the hot chick across the room. Central Office has a suggested format and it does not include any of the aforementioned fluff. I've often wondered if it's just the area we live in. There's so much oversensitivity and political correctness. Don't worry; you won't get sued for not mentioning the guy's name that hung the steps and tradition on the wall at the meeting. So why don't we focus on the sobriety and not the ego?

If you are a regular attendee to a meeting that spends more time yakking and less time sharing, you might bring a copy of the suggested A.A. format to your next business meeting. You can contact Central Office and they will be happy to help you.



## Faithful FIVERS!

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.	Kathryn G.
Ann & Denise	Kevin S.
Barbara K.	Lauren H.
Barbara L.	Leigh B.
Barbara M.	Lelan & Rich H.
Brent H.	Leo H.
Bruce D.	Lisa M.
Caroline A.	Liz & Aiden D.
Casey L.	Lyle W.
Charles D.	Margarite S.
Dan & Sherry T.	Marit L.
David H.	Martha S.
David J.	Michael W.
David P.	Michael Z.
Dennis & Lucy O.	Nancie G.
Dick F.	Patrick M.
Donald Ray N.	Paul M.
Doug C.	Peg L.
Flossie N.	Peggy T.
Fay K.	Pene P.
Frances L.	Penelope & Robert
George S.	Phyllis S.
Giles H.	Robert C.
James M.	Robert W.
James W.	Sara D.
Jeanne C.	Scott C.
Joanne K.	Sheila H.
John G.	Steve A.
John M.	Steve F.
John V.	Stu S.
Judy W.	Sylvia D.
Karen K.	Tim M.
Kathleen C.	Tom M.
	Tracy F.

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!



## 10 Worst Excuses to Cancel a Meeting with your Sponsor

Compiled by Annia R.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>10</b><br/>You need a mani-pedi.</p> <p><b>9</b><br/>A date with another newcomer.</p> <p><b>8</b><br/>Semi-annual sale at Victoria's Secret.</p> <p><b>7</b><br/>A new episode of <i>Lost</i> on TV.</p> <p><b>6</b><br/>Your ex wants to talk over drinks.</p> | <p><b>5</b><br/>You heard about a new harm reduction program.</p> <p><b>4</b><br/>Drinks are half off at your favorite bar.</p> <p><b>3</b><br/>Your drug dealer wants to catch up.</p> <p><b>2</b><br/>It's supposed to rain today.</p> <p><b>1</b><br/>Your dog ate your step work.</p> |
|--|---|

## STEP VIII

# Am I Willing?

by Harry P.T.

My most recent experience with Step Eight came just a couple of weeks ago. I have worked the steps several times over the years, but when opportunities come knocking, you have to go to work.

Fifteen years ago, I had my last words with one of my four sisters. If it were not for mistakenly answering the phone at my mother's house, that win streak would have continued. I guess God had a better idea.

My sister had removed herself from the family years ago, with the exception of my mother. Since she has shown such litigious tendencies, we were all just fine with letting her be on her own. Fifteen years ago, she told me that she was not going to pay me monies as she was instructed to do as part of a family business. That was my last straw as far as she went, and I told her where she could shove that money! I moved on, with no desire to ever talk to this insane person again.

Moving forward to picking up the phone at Mom's: I heard this voice that


*"Made a list of all persons  
we had harmed, and  
became willing to make  
amends to them all."*

made me cringe. She asked how I was. My answer, "Fine." She babbled on as she always has and somehow came around to the topic of the money, as if she had paid me. After so many years, I had totally forgotten about it, but the resentment got red hot in a second. I reiterated where she could shove her money, told her she was a liar and hung up the phone.

A couple of weeks later, I got an envelope in the mail with a note and a copy of the canceled check from fifteen years earlier. She *had* paid me and, with my own busy life and in early sobriety, I had not remembered! The note read something like, I hope this satisfies that you've been paid and "when you are ready to work Step Eight, give me a call." Yeah, right! To my knowledge, that poor soul has never worked a program, although she qualifies for several. I am guessing that she was

really looking for an amends from me and probably was hoping that I would call her when ready to work the Ninth Step. But upon her request, I began working the Eighth Step. I put her name on paper and became *willing* to make amends (on her deathbed, so she can't sue me for some odd reason).

I called my old sponsor, Mike, in Atlanta, who knows my family story well, and told him all about it. I thought he would fall over laughing. We agreed that I had worked an Eighth Step, and he suggested I call her with an apology. I insisted that that would never happen, due to her desire to sue people at the drop of a hat, as it could cause harm to other family members or me. My San Francisco sponsor agreed.

As much as I dislike this person and the trouble she has caused for others, I keep her in my prayers. At times in my mind I do treat her like the sick person. Other times, it's me being the sick one. God has opened many doors for me and I'm guessing that this story is far from over. When the time comes, I hope I'm spiritually fit. 

## Friend of Bill, Friend to Margaret

*Sobriety let this  
alcoholic be a real friend*

by Pam B.

One of the things I had when I drank was alcohol-induced, incredibly brief friendships founded on falsehood. In the warm glow of the third cocktail at my corner bar, I'd meet someone and soon I'd divulge my secrets, speak of my passions, be astonishingly intelligent, especially funny and amazingly witty. I'd share my political views, my childhood trauma, the sorrows that were in the depth of my soul, and then—I'd buy another round. Usually

the friendship would end with the "last call for alcohol" and the next day, if I thought about the person at all, it would be with a vague embarrassment. The warm glow of the cocktails would be gone and the budding friendship with it.

Margaret was a friend I met when I was newly sober. She died recently. She was very old and in terrible health, but her life force was strong and she was unfailingly cheerful and



*"Keep on the firing lines of life with these motives and God will keep you unharmed."*

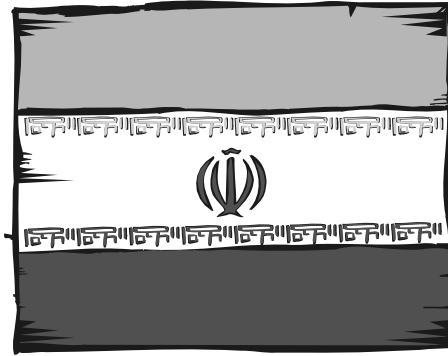
## Twelfth -Stepping in IRAN

by Kam V.

I am 12 years sober and have been in San Francisco since May 2008. I do teleservice and recently started a meeting called "By the Book" on Saturdays at 10 am in Potrero Hill on the corner of Mariposa and De Haro.

One of my first memories was of my mother crying in front of the TV. I was four years old, and it was 1980, the time of the Iranian revolution. I looked at the TV and I saw the Shah walking down the steps of a plane into exile. Our ties with our homeland were severed for many years from that day until I went back to Iran at the age of 19. Before I returned, I was spiritually bankrupt and I constantly prayed, as I was trying to quit the disease of alcoholism that wouldn't quit me. I was hearing voices that terrified me. When I finally returned to Iran, I rediscovered my roots and I heard the spirit of my grandfather who had been a famous poet and had written lyrics for many of the famous singers of his day.


I don't remember what he said, but I was possessed by a powerful sense of love from his spirit. He silenced the chorus of terrifying voices. I returned a few times after that to Iran, but didn't know of any meetings. Eventually, one time I returned and I hooked up



with a local guy by the name of Mor-teza L. Together, we were "rocketed into the fourth dimension" (Big Book, p. 25) during that trip and the other trips that followed it. The other fellowship [Narcotics Anonymous-Ed.] has a strong presence there, but A.A. is very weak and small. We ended up twelfth-stepping our way into finding the "The Great Reality" (Big Book, pp. 55 and 161) within us. I discovered how they felt in the early days of A.A. through this Twelfth Step experience. Many days my phone rang incessantly and I rarely slept more than five hours a night.

I led a step study in a small village by the name of Saveh just outside the capital city, Tehran. I spoke in a mosque in Hamedan, a city where they

are now unearthing structures from 7000 years ago. I tried with my A.A. friend to twelfth-step a couple of burly drug dealers in a town called Astara on the border with Russia. And all the time, I felt the power of God flowing through me. By opening myself to service at great inconvenience to myself, I had drawn near to my Creator. All the time I remember the book telling me: "Keep on the firing lines of life with these motives and God will keep you unharmed." (Big Book, p. 102) I took those words seriously as I ate lunch in a restaurant in Hamedan where a group of men sat down beside us and put down their machine guns to eat.


I remember walking into a detox that looked like a cave and smelt of death. In a small, enclosed space, twenty to thirty people huddled under covers with the aches and pains of the early days of recovery. I have been there a couple of times now and have witnessed people arise from that demoralizing place and return to Iranian society once more. I experienced nothing like the myriad of red tape one has to go through to twelfth-step here. Anytime I wanted, I could walk into a detox and work with a man, and be set on my feet as Bill once was. These were a few of my experiences . . . 

wise and beautiful. I was able to have her as a true friend because I remembered to call her, drive to her apartment, show up with a bag of groceries, share cups of tea, and listen while she shared her stories and wisdom. I was able to *be* on Sunday morning the person she had spoken to on Saturday night.

I never spoke to Margaret about alcoholism. She wasn't an alcoholic; in fact she seemed to need or jones after

very little in this life beyond a friend, a cup of tea and a beloved pet on her lap. And, though I sensed she might have been conflicted or confused if I'd told her I was alcoholic, the reality for me was that we spoke of the A.A. program all the time. By that I mean, we talked of how much hope there was in shared experiences, how important it was to let go and to laugh, and how love and tolerance was the best code for living. She was a teacher and a

friend, and when I am lacking in courage, I think of her and I find it where she taught me it lived—right here in my heart.

This was the way it was: we showed up for each other and it was true and important to both of us. In writing this I've begun to understand that I was able to be a friend to Margaret because, before I met her, I'd begun to live my life as a "friend of Bill." 

# Misstep in Mali

## *When a Trip Turns Out Not to be a Vacation*

by Dianne E.

One of the gifts of recovery is the ability to travel and remember what I saw. Little did I know, when planning my last trip, how valuable were the tools I've learned in A.A. That trip was to Mali, West Africa. Historically, Mali is the site of a mighty culture and a major trade route; today it's the largest, and perhaps poorest, country in West Africa. I was very much looking forward to visiting there. We had planned a tour along the Niger River, through country of the mysterious Dogon people, to the famous market and mud mosques of Djenné, to Timbuktu and then to a Tuareg nomad camp in the Sahara desert. As it turned out, I mostly saw Mali from the car.

Two days after we arrived, we were on the remote Bandiagara Escarpment, gazing at ancient mud cliff dwellings. I slipped and heard a bone break. It was about two kilometers downhill to the nearest village and road. I was wondering how I would get out of there, if there were any rescue helicopters in Mali. I didn't see him coming, but suddenly I was lifted onto the back of a barefoot Dogon tribesman. My weight on his back added to gravity and we trotted down the rocky cliffside, going faster and faster. My heart was in my throat. We reached the village, I was put in a car and, after driving five hours down bumpy dirt roads, found an x-ray machine and a western-style doctor. I was put in a cast and told not to set my foot down. I didn't know if my leg needed setting, but my guide couldn't translate that. I asked about



*"Before I joined this fellowship, any one of these events would have given me ample excuse*

crutches, and the doctor sent us to the local carpentry shop.

The handmade crutches were heavy, unwieldy and unusable. For the next three days, I was carried between bed and bathroom, hotel and car. I stayed in my room while the others travelled to Dogon villages and spent a night in Djenné. My guide, a wonderful man, stayed behind to translate and carry me, and checked on me several times a day. All this time, I kept a surprisingly good outlook on everything. When I did cry, the Africans were very disturbed, rushing to tell me, "don't cry; be strong." And I was strong; I seldom

cried, and then only from pain or frustration. I was surprisingly untroubled by fear or self-pity.

It was clear that I could not continue the trip. So I hired a car and driver and reached a private clinic in Bamako, the capital, about 12 hours later. The doctor there examined me and said I had better stay in the hospital until I could go home. After a week, during which my guide provided me companionship, a telephone and translations, a travel nurse was finally sent to escort me home.

To sum up: I broke my ankle on the third day of a long-awaited trip. I spent ten days incapacitated in a very undeveloped country where I couldn't speak the language and I had no friends or fellowship. I arrived home to

lengthy surgery, more than a month in the hospital, long confinement to a wheelchair, and several months in a cast. Six months later, I'm still not "living happily ever after." The delay in proper medical attention caused complications that keep me from being able to walk or stand for very long. It's possible that this is just the way it is, although I'm seeking lots of medical advice.

Before I joined this incredible fellowship, any one of these events would have given me ample excuse to drink or drug. Today I'm practicing invaluable tools given to me in A.A.—showing up, doing the next right thing and staying in the present. Today I don't have to pick up!

**Many thanks to the Sunshine Club, who truly brightened my days of confinement.**



## Cruisin' the High Seas to Insanity!

by Chris D.

It started out as a great idea: going on a cruise with my mother and my sister who is in the early stages of divorce. At the time, my sister Kathy was also about to celebrate 60 days of sober bliss. As the plan solidified, the word seemed to get out. Our older sister (extremely obsessive compulsive) and our older brother (the drunk from hell) got wind of the upcoming event. Somehow in the planning stages these two got their tickets to the show. So off we went.

From the moment we met in Houston, the calm before the storm was a-brewin'. Since the limo ride to the port in Galveston was a cheaper way to go, it gave us leeway to make a stop along the way for last minute provisions. Eileen (the O.C.) had to have some sunscreen for her overly pasty white body. Of course, Tim had to have beer. In the next hour, Tim's six-pack was gone, Eileen's legs were glistening with lotion and we were pulling in to port.

We tried to get the room arrangements so that Kathy and I would room together, being the sober ones, but Tim would have none of that. Mom and Eileen really didn't want any part of Tim's stumbling drunkenness either. Well, I was stuck.

We settled in our room and met with the others as planned. Tim's never-ending lust for beer led us to a couple of the bars for a quickie along the way. Eileen, also

*"...my brother, crazed in his drunkenness, woke me and wanted to start a fight, much like the old days"*

known to the family as "the planning commissioner," had the rest of the evening arranged, except for the fact that she forgot to check with the rest of us. Mom wanted to find the bridge players, Tim wanted more beer and Kathy and I frantically looked for any "friends of Bill W." meeting places. Poor Eileen, you'd think that she would figure it out!

I don't know about the rest of them, but we sure lucked out. In less than an hour, an A.A. meeting was scheduled in one of the boardrooms in the bowels of the ship. I felt a sense of

relief already, and we hadn't even left port yet. Kathy and I made our way to the meeting early to make sure we got a seat. Fifteen minutes early and we were the only ones there, so we waited. As it turned out, we were the only ones to show, so we had a meeting. It was better than Eileen's plan, whatever it was. There was a meeting each day at the same time and we went. The next day we were happy to be joined by an awesome middle-aged couple with long-term sobriety—such a relief. You see, my 19 years and Kathy's 60 days had led to pretty much a one-way meeting. With her pink cloud and a motor mouth, my ears quickly got sore!

We continued to meet and spend time with our new friends. I needed to vent, and my sober friend John gladly listened. The second night my brother, in his crazed drunkenness, woke me and wanted to start a fight, much like the old days. He felt that earlier in the evening, I was hitting on some girl he was making time with. Now, I know his type (any), and this

really wasn't the case. In his fit of rage, he pulled all his bedding, went out to the balcony and tried to pass out there. It sure was hard to sleep with one eye open while laughing. Now, having made just one friend to talk to, my trip was pleasurable. There is so much more insanity on this trip, but once again, one drunk helping another paved the way for peace and serenity. I closed my eyes, said a prayer and fell asleep in the sun, only to wake with sunburn!



**TP**

# Zimbabwe Nights

*Learning that “Drunk Speak” is a Universal Language.*

by David G.

*The author writes about the A.A. meeting he attended in Zimbabwe on the occasion of his first anniversary.*

The ritual begins in a familiar way: a reading of the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions. It ends with the Serenity Prayer. Apart from the oppressive heat, flies, and dust, it's identical to meetings I know in San Francisco or London. There's a fellow next to me who smells like a pub floor: stale booze and cigarettes.

Grinning wide as a gorge, he puts a hand on my shoulder to lean in and whisper, but loses his balance, swinging his full weight onto me, tipping us both over. In the confusion, he forgets to whisper, shouting in Shona, or Ndebele—languages I've never heard before. But I know what he means. Drunk-speak is universal. He's saying, “You're my best mate.” I wipe the booze and spittle from my ear, smiling at him. Baffled by the chaos, it takes a moment before his features reciprocate, opening up like a stop-motion flower bloom. Most of the faces surrounding us are white. They're also leathery, sun-damaged and nicotine-wracked. They're the “Rhodies” I've heard about: white Zimbabweans. Several glare at the drunken fellow next to me, his skin a deep, rich black, perspiring from booze. As the outburst subsides, he lapses into a gentle doze, head lolling, spit pooling at the corners of his mouth.

The secretary asks newcomers to



*“These people are clinging to sobriety by their fingernails; their lives depend upon it, and they can't afford to have that grasp threatened. Everything around them is collapsing; their country is falling apart.”*

identify themselves, “by your first names only—this is not meant to embarrass you, but so we can offer you our phone numbers afterwards.” Hands rise—big, calloused, farmers' hands—fluttering aloft like startled Marabou storks. Another call goes out for visitors. My hand goes up. I tell them my name, where I'm from, and that today is my first birthday. I have one year clean and sober, almost to the minute. A gruff-voiced Rhodie tells me to forget about how much time I've got. “The only meas-

ure that matters is an arm's length between your mouth and your next drink,” he says.

That stings. I'm proud of my one-year achievement. At the same time I'm humbled, and I suspect he's right.

There's tension in the room as a white farmer shares about his recent eviction. Two of his workers have been killed in the recent unrest. Gradually, I realize that the antipathy

towards my neighbor was for his drunkenness; it had nothing to do with his skin color. These people are clinging to sobriety by their fingernails; their lives depend upon it, and they can't afford to have that grasp threatened. Everything around them is collapsing; their country is falling apart. Many have been evicted from their land, their homes burned and family members shot and killed. Again, I'm humbled because I'm not sure I could deal with that without resorting to drink, and I admire them for doing so. But that's why we're all here: to deal with, and to cope—by sharing our strength, hope and experience, no matter what our differences.

When the meeting ends, we stream out into the night. But several remain in the meeting room, tending to my fellow drunk, making sure he has shelter and numbers to call when he's sober. And most important of all, to tell him—unconditionally—to keep coming back.



# Meet **THE MEETING**

## Pax West

by Allen F.

Many of us miss the opportunity to go to men's meetings. Of course, gender keeps some away, and for those of us who gender qualify, men's meetings are not nearly as common or convenient as mixed meetings. However, on a recent Monday noon in the basement of Old St. Mary's Church, more than 60 men gathered for the Monday PAX West speaker meeting. The relaxed enthusiasm and fun was contagious and long missed; the honesty was inspiring, the dedication and sobriety, palpable. PAX West is more than just a meeting.

Approximately 30 years ago, the original PAX meeting was formed in New York City. PAX stood for *Police Xavier* (referring to officers and priests), as well as peace. Joe C., a transplant to San Francisco, missed his Big Apple meetings and set out to recreate it here by the Golden Gate. He formed PAX West, which still has the flavor reminiscent of mid-Manhattan. Joe moved on and also started PAX Miami.

The meeting begins as the men arrive in the large basement room. Paper sack lunches rustle while the men's chatter builds and the crowd swells to near capacity. Sights and smells abound of everything from delicious looking concoctions in Tupperware bowls to fast food. Expensive suits mix with chains and tats in appreciation of the common goal of sobriety. Mike, the current secretary, starts the meeting in the traditional way.

This men's meeting rings most clearly as the Serenity Prayer begins. More than sixty baritones in unison of note, tempo and verve, give a new feeling to the prayer. If voices were church bells, this would be the sound of the largest bells—deep, unadorned, and felt more in one's bones than ears.

The speaker had many years of sobriety. He started as a preacher might. His experience, strength and hope clearly showed he was a man with words to heed. Beyond his wisdom, it became clear he had humanity and even greater insight and humor. There were no jokes or stories that couldn't be told in a mixed meeting (well, almost none), but here among the guys, they were told without censure. This allowed an added punch. Being guys only, it was as if no one had to suck in their gut. (Yes, ladies, guys do suck it in—for some of us, you couldn't tell, but it is true.) Bellies and humor could be let loose.

Discussion followed and the meeting was

adjourned with the Lord's Prayer in perfect baritone pitch. If you miss that big city feel in a meeting, want to relax with the guys, share special perspectives and challenges that face the male of the alcoholic species, or just want to find a lively meeting full of men who are moving beyond half measures, find your way to St. Mary's on Mondays. It's through the bookstore on Grant at California, and down the stairs. You'll be glad you came. I was.

**PAX West meets at Noon on Mondays at Old St. Mary's Church, 660 California Street in the Financial District.**



## The Spirit of San Francisco

PRESENTS

# COMEDY NIGHT

## Friday, August 21, 2009



### EVENT LOCATION

**777 Brotherhood Way  
San Francisco, CA**

### Tickets \$10 advance/door

Purchase tickets online at  
[www.spirit-sf.org](http://www.spirit-sf.org)  
Additional Info email [info@spirit-sf.org](mailto:info@spirit-sf.org)  
or call 415-218-7609

4th Annual Golf Classic at Crystal Springs - Wednesday, September 16th

## The 17th Annual Spirit of SF Convention

**October 2 - 4, 2009**

# ifb meeting summary – july 2009

The IFB is the Board of Directors for our local AA Central Office (San Francisco and Marin Counties)

The following meetings have registered Intergroup Representatives who attended the last IFB meeting.  
If your meeting was not represented, consider electing an Intergroup (IFB) Representative and /or an alternate  
so your meeting is effectively represented

Any Lengths	Downtown Mill Valley	Let It Be Now	Saturday Easy Does It	Tiburon Men's Stag
Attitude Adjustment	Fireside Chat	Marina Discussion	Sunset 9'ers (Sat.)	Too Early
Blackies Pasture	High Noon (Saturday)	Men's Gentle Touch	Serenity Seekers	Tuesday Downtown
Blue Book Special	High Noon (Tuesday)	Mid-Morning Support	SFPOA	Valencia Smokefree
Castro Discussion	High Noon (Sunday)	Mill Valley 7am	Sober 5150's	We Care
Cocoanuts	Home Group	Miracles On 24th St	Some are Sicker than Others	West Portal Group
Code Blue	Huntington Square	Noon Smokeless	Steppin Up	Women Who Drank Too Much
Common Welfare	Join the Tribe	On Awakening	Sunset 9'ers (Sun.)	Women's Promises
Cow Hollow Men's	Keep Coming Back	Queers, Crackpots & Fallen Women	Ten Years After	
Cow Hollow Young People	Keep It Simple	Room to Grow	Tiburon Haven Group	

Following is an unofficial summary of actions, information, upcoming business and service opportunities discussed at the July 2009 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 Central Office or see our website.

## IFB Officer Reports

**Chair:** Chuck K. is rotating out of the Chair position and thanked everyone for his last two years of elected service, for which he was very grateful. His full report is on the website.

**Treasurer:** The financials are looking better this month than last. Patrick noted that year-to-date rating is good, but that it fluctuates from month to month. The restricted cash is primarily comprised of the prudent reserve and overall bank balances are good. Maury purchased a [COC approved] large order of books before the prices went up July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Central Office Manager:** Maury was on vacation, no report was presented.

**Central Office Committee:** This past term's COC did not complete the Central Office survey but that she hopes the next COC will take it on.

## Election of Officers for 2009 – 2010

Michael S. was elected Chair. Michael P. was elected Vice Chair. Jared G. was elected Secretary. Dashiell T. was elected Treasurer. Margret J., John H., Thayer W., and Bob W. were elected to the Central Office Committee.

**IFB Committee Reports:** Anyone wanting more information on service

**opportunities may contact Central Office. You don't need to be a member of the IFB to be on a committee— please let all groups know that the committees can use support.**

a. Access Committee: There was ASL signing at Founders Day and the committee is working on an electronic version of the accommodations tracking form to see how to best assist the CO staff and volunteers.

b. Archives Committee: Tracy asked reps to see his report online.

c. 12<sup>th</sup> Step Committee: Olive was elected as the new 12<sup>th</sup> Step Committee Chair and there is a workshop coming up.

d. Orientation Committee: Ted explained that new Reps must complete orientation to be eligible to vote.

e. *The Point* Editorial Committee: This month's issue is about the 7<sup>th</sup> Step and Tradition.

f. Trusted Servants Workshop Committee: Tracy F. explained the committee's purpose. There is a trusted servants workshop coming up. Coffee and donuts will be served. One year has come and gone so his commitment will be up and he will be rotating off. Tracy hopes someone will keep the committee alive.

g. Web Committee: The IFB meeting agenda, the previous month's notes, and all of the reports are online as one PDF w/ all of the committee reports, which is really handy to view and/or print out the documents. The 12<sup>th</sup> step committee info is up on the web.

h. Fellowship Committee: The Founders'

Day play and the baseball game were a success and thanked all of the volunteers who assisted to make the whole day possible. The committee elected Virginia M. as the interim Chair until Jackie B. is eligible to be back on the IFB in September.

## Special Committee Reports

Teleservice, SF: There are openings for 10AM-2PM 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday backup, 2PM-6PM 1st Sunday backup, and overnight 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday. Orientation is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday at Central Office.

PI/CPC: No report.

## IFB Liaison Reports

a. General Service, SF: David had nothing to report.

b. General Service, Marin: Unity Day coming up and there will be a July 4<sup>th</sup> BBQ,

c. Teleservice, Marin: Marin Unity Day & 12<sup>th</sup> step workshop are coming up.

d. Living Sober: Is coming up this weekend.

## Other

There are about 50 CDs in the lending library so far at Central Office. Come down to listen to a meeting away from the meeting.

## Adjourn with the Responsibility Statement

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:57PM; seconded and passed unanimously.

Rebecca D. S.,  
IFB Secretary

## 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**

Michael S. chair@aasf.org

#### **VICE CHAIR**

Michael P. vicechair@aasf.org

#### **TREASURER**

Dashiell T. treasurer@aasf.org

#### **RECORDING SECRETARY**

Jared G. secretary@aasf.org

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

#### **CENTRAL OFFICE COMMITTEE**

Danny F. coc@aasf.org

#### **12th STEP COMMITTEE**

Olive G. 12thstep@aasf.org

#### **ARCHIVES COMMITTEE**

Tracy F. archives@aasf.org

#### **ORIENTATION COMMITTEE**

Ted R. orientation@aasf.org

#### **FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE**

Virginia M. fellowship@aasf.org

#### **THE POINT**

Rich H. thepoint@aasf.org

#### **ACCESS COMMITTEE**

Virginia M. access@aasf.org

#### **TRUSTED SERVANTS**

#### **WORKSHOP COMMITTEE**

Needs Chairperson

#### **WEBSITE COMMITTEE**

Michael P. website@aasf.org

#### **PI/CPC COMMITTEE**

Paul P. picpc@aasf.org

#### **SF TELESERVICE COMMITTEE**

Steve R. sfteleservice@aasf.org

## Searching for a Solution

### *This Alcoholic Found Her Heart in San Francisco*

by Gunilla



Hi, my name is Gunilla and I am an alcoholic. I am 65 years old and live in Stockholm, Sweden. I want to thank A.A. for my sobriety and my life. If I had not come to my first

A.A. meeting at the Dry Dock, I would probably be dead.

Both my parents were alcoholics so I decided that I am not going to be *that*. But of course that's just what I became. When I was 54, I had reached my alcoholic bottom. Depressed, lonely and thinking of suicide, I suddenly said to myself I have to leave Sweden and go find "something." I decided to go to the U.S. I stayed in a youth hostel in San Francisco, which was wonderful, but I was still depressed and crazy. I couldn't move away from myself.

One day I walked over the Golden Gate Bridge. Back at the Marina, I met a woman who read her Tarot cards for me. She said I was going to meet a man—how original! I was desperate and lonely, so I took her to dinner. She told me about her sad life and said she had been a member of A.A.

The next day at a coffee shop, a man was sitting at the table next to me and we started to talk. The day afterward, we took a walk at the Marina. There he just came out and told me he was also a member of A.A. I felt like something big

was happening to me. The man talked to me about spirituality. I asked if he would take me to a meeting and two days later, he did.

I can still see the Dry Dock with the bookstore. I said to my new friend that I did not want

anyone to speak to me, so we came late to the meeting. There was a speaker with whom I had nothing in common, but after a while when people started to share, I knew that I, too, was an alcoholic. I cried and realized that I did not have to die.

I went home to Sweden a few days later, where I started to go to meetings and got very involved in service. But after six months of sobriety, my depression returned. I came back to the U.S., this time to New York. The meetings again helped me a lot and I celebrated my first year of sobriety at the Perry Street meeting.

I have travelled a lot these past years. I have visited meetings in England and Scotland, and have been to English-speaking meetings in Paris. I worked briefly in Uganda and went to meetings there. Last year I celebrated my tenth anniversary at a meeting in Athens.

Wherever I find the fellowship of A.A. around the world, I always feel that I found my heart in San Francisco at the first Dry Dock meeting. Thank you, A.A., for my life.



# aa group contributions

Fellowship Contributions			May. 09	YTD	Marin Group Contributions			May. 09	YTD	SF Group Contributions			May. 09	YTD
Artists & Writers F 630pm			952	952	Novato Monday Stag M 8pm				62	A New Start F 830pm				262
Brisbane Breakfast Bunch			36	154	Primary Purpose W 830pm				65	A Vision for You (SF) Su 630pm				65
Contribution Box				340	Quitting Time MWF 530pm				198	AA Step Study Su 6pm				121
Gay & Lesbian Newcomers				22	Refugee Th 12pm				30	Afro American Beginners Sat 8pm				147
Gay Newcomers Group				13	Reveille 5D 7am			200	200	After Work M 6PM				95
Harbor Lights Fellowship				25	Rise N Shine Sun 10am				122	Agnostics & Freethinkers Su 630pm		100	100	
IFB			103	525	San Geronimo Valley M 8pm				58	Alumni W 830pm				43
Serenity House			150	750	Sausalito 12 Step Study Group				107	Amazing Grace M 7pm				162
<b>Total Fellowship Contributions</b>			<b>\$1,241</b>	<b>\$2,781</b>	Serendipity Sa 11am				126	Any Lengths Sat 930am				490
					Sisters In Sobriety Th 730pm (M)			46	146	Artists & Writers F 630pm				96
<b>Marin Group Contributions</b>			<b>May. 09</b>	<b>YTD</b>	Six O'Clock Step Th 6pm				59	As Bill Sees It - Keep It Simple Tu 7am				210
Attitude Adjustment 7D 7am			360	1,260	Six O'Clock Sunset Th 6pm				95	As Bill Sees It Th 830pm				142
Awakenings Sa 830am				36	Sober & Serene F 7pm				621	As Bill Sees It Tu 1210pm				203
Awareness/Acceptance M 1030am				47	Steps to Freedom M 730pm			60	201	Be Still AA Su 12pm				586
Blackie's Pasture Sa 830pm			85	135	Steps To The Solution W 715pm			80	151	Beginners Meeting Sat 6pm		329	329	
Bounce Back M 6pm				400	Sunday Express Sun 6pm				100	Bernal Big Book Sat 5pm				269
Candlelight Sun 830pm			18	188	Sunlight of the Spirit Th 7pm				50	Bernal New Day 7D		268	987	
Closed Women Step Study Tu 330pm				318	Survivors M 12pm				111	Big Book Basics F 8pm				236
Cover to Cover W 800pm				113	T.G.I.F. F 6pm				247	Big Book Study Su 1130am				155
Day At A Time 7D 630am			370	370	Terra Linda Group Th 830pm				650	Blue Book Special Su 11am				113
Design For Living (Marin) W 7pm				61	The Barnyard Group Sa 4pm				335	Buena Vista Breakfast Su 12pm		254	254	
Downtown Mill Valley F 830pm				444	The Novato Group F 830pm				83	Came to Park Sat 7pm				113
Early Birds Sa 6am				36	Thursday Night Book Club Th 7pm			17	17	Castro Discussion W 8pm				752
Freedom Finders F 830pm				590	Tiburon Beginners & Closed Tu			552	1,080	Castro Monday Big Book M 830pm				167
Friday Night Book F 830pm				175	Tiburon Haven Sun 12pm				100	Cocoanuts Su 9am		60	132	
Friday Night Gay Men's Stag F 830pm				65	Tuesday Chip Meeting Tu 8pm			1,186	1,186	Code Blue Big Book Study W 7pm				139
Gratitude Tu 8pm				389	Twice Blessed W 730pm				187	Cow Hollow Men's Group W 8pm		214	214	
Happy, Joyous & Free 5D 12pm				1,250	We, Us and Ours M 650pm			100	250	Crossroads Sun 12pm				318
High & Dry W 12pm				308	Wednesday Night SD W 7pm			17	17	Design for Living Sat 8am				345
Intimate Feelings Sa 10am				181	What's It All About F 12pm				200	Diamond Heights Tu 830pm				93
Inverness Sunday Serenity Su 10am			112	112	Women on Wednesday W 7pm				50	Doin' the Deal Sun 10pm				81
Island Group Th 8pm				63	Women's Big Book Tu 1030am				100	Each Day a New Beginning F 7am				827
Marin City Groups 5D 630pm				211	Working Dogs W 1205pm				343	Each Day A New Beginning Su 8am				673
Marin Newcomers M 830pm			677	677	<b>Total Marin Group Contributions</b>			<b>\$5,123</b>	<b>\$20,332</b>	Each Day a New Beginning Th 7am				213
Men Only Stag Sa 6pm			26	26	<b>SF Group Contributions</b>			<b>May. 09</b>	<b>YTD</b>	Each Day a New Beginning Tu 7am				599
Mill Valley 7D 7am			500	1,100	6am Dry Dock Tu			131	131	Each Day a New Beginning W 7am				174
Mill Valley Discussion W 830pm				290	6am Marina Dock Sa				91	Early Start F 6pm				757
Monday Blues M 630pm			437	437	7am As Bill Sees It Fri			76	193	Easy Does It Tu 6pm				120
Monday Night Stag (Tiburon) 8pm				1,347	7am Grab Bag M 7am				30	Embarcadero Group 5D 1210pm				220
Monday Night Women's M 8pm				238	7am Living Sober W 7am				50	Epiphany Group Th 8pm		81	144	
Monday Nooners M 12pm			230	586	7am Smokeless Su 7am				85	Eureka Valley Topic M 6pm				806
Morning After Sa 10am				750	7am Speaker Discussion Th 7am				106	Excelsior Free for All Sa 8pm				88
Morning Attitude Adjustment MTuF 7am			50	50	7am Step Discussion Tu 7am				22	Federal Speaker Su 12pm				412
Nativity Monday Night Big Book M 8pm				100	830am Smokeless Tu 830am			235	235	Firefighters & Friends Tu 10am				235
Newcomers Step M 730pm				424	A Coffee Pot & A Resentment M 8pm				42	Fireside Chat Group Th 8pm				232
Noon Tu 12pm				110	A is for Alcohol Tu 6pm				132	Franciscan Noon Discussion M 12pm				60
North Bay Discussion Group Su 8pm				100						Friday All Groups F 830pm				1,926



SF Group Contributions	May. 09	YTD	SF Group Contributions	May. 09	YTD	SF Group Contributions	May. 09	YTD
Friday at Five F 5pm		80	Pax West Th 12pm	163	163	Valencia Smokefree F 6pm	130	254
Friday Lunchtime Step F 12pm		100	Progress Not Perfection Tu 830pm		380	Walk of Shame W 8pm		84
Friday Smokeless F 830pm		166	Queers, Crackpots & Fallen Women		89	Waterfront Sun 8pm		20
Girls Night Out W 815pm		97	Rebound W 830pm		60	We Care Tu 12pm		238
Gold Mine Group M 8pm		266	Relapse, Reb., Retreads & Winners Tu 630pm		60	West Portal W 830pm		140
Golden Gate Seniors Tu 130pm		68	Rigorous Honesty Th 1205pm		120	Wharfrats Th 815pm		298
Goodlands Su 2pm		150	Room to Grow F 8pm		375	Wits End Step Study Tu 8pm	25	25
Haight Street Blues Tu 615pm		228	Saturday Afternoon Meditation Sat 5pm		135	Women Living Sober Sa 10am		120
Happy Hour F 630pm	62	62	Saturday Night Regroup Sat 730pm		244	Women Who Drank Too... Tu 615pm	13	13
Happy Hour Ladies Night F 530pm		84	Shamrocks & Serenity M 730pm		400	Women's 10 Years Plus Th 615pm		325
High Noon Friday 1215pm		166	Sinbar Su 830pm	194	194	Women's Kitchen Table Tu 630pm		321
High Noon Monday 1215pm		165	Sisters Circle Su 6pm		247	Women's Meeting There is... W 6pm		146
High Noon Saturday 1215pm		209	Sobriety & Beyond W 7pm		45	Work In Progress Sat 7pm	195	672
High Noon Thursday 1215pm	180	372	Sometimes Slowly Sa 11am		234	<b>Total SF Group Contributions</b>	<b>\$4,389</b>	<b>\$41,116</b>
High Noon Tuesday 1215pm		185	SFPOA Th 7pm		440			
High Noon Wednesday 1215pm		115	St. Francis Men's F 830pm		296	<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>\$10,753</b>	<b>\$64,229</b>
Hilldwellers M 8pm		326	Step Talk Su 830am		490			
Home Group Sat 830pm		191	Steppin' Up Tu 630pm		267			
How Was Your Week? Sa 10am		123	Stepping Out Sat 6pm		50			
Huntington Square W 630pm		340	Stepping Stone Step Study M 7pm		201			
Join the Tribe Tu 7pm		264	Stonestown M 8pm		246			
Joys of Recovery Tu 8pm		71	Sunday Bookworms Sun 730pm	126	266			
Keep Coming Back Sa 11am		1,244	Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag Su 930am		826			
Keep It Simple Sat 830pm		399	Sunday Night 3rd Step Group 5pm	446	446			
Light Steppers Su 7pm		120	Sunday Night Castro SD Su 8pm		913			
Living Sober with HIV W 6pm		364	Sundown W 7pm	204	204			
Luke's Group W 8pm		175	Sunset 11'ers Sa	200	200			
Lush Lounge Sa 2pm		168	Sunset 11'ers Su		35			
Marina Discussion F 830pm		745	Sunset 9'ers F		36			
Mid-Morning Support Su 1030am		331	Sunset 9'ers M	110	198			
Midnight Meditation Sat 12am		20	Sunset 9'ers Sa		302			
Mission Creek Meeting		95	Sunset 9'ers W	38	115			
Mission Creek Meeting Tu 6pm	75	80	Sunset Speaker Step Sun 730pm		147			
Mission Terrace W 8pm		251	Surf Tu 8pm		72			
Monday Beginners M 8pm		295	Sutter Street Beginners Sat 6pm		318			
Monday Monday M 1215pm		185	Ten Years After Su 6pm		257			
New Hope Big Book M 630pm		78	The Drive Thru W 1215pm		458			
New Life W 7pm		121	The Parent Trap M 1230pm		223			
No Reservation M 12pm		438	They Don't Know Who We Are Sat 7pm	30	30			
Noon Smokeless F 12pm		190	They Stopped In Time M 8pm		193			
Noon Smokeless M 12pm		23	Thursday Morning Men's BB Study Th 6am		51			
Noon Smokeless Th 12pm		168	Thursday Night Women's Th 630pm		208			
Noon Smokeless W 12pm		60	Too Early Sat 8am	171	1,123			
One, Two, Three, Go! W 1pm		30	Trudgers Discussion Su 7pm	180	180			
Park Presidio M 830pm		54	Tuesday Big Book Study Tu 6pm		60			
Parkside Th 830pm	98	192	Tuesday Downtown Tu 8pm		283			
Pax West M 12pm		784	Twelve Steps to Happiness F 730pm		120			

## Individual Contributions

*to Central Office were made through July 15, 2009 honoring the following members:*

### ONGOING MEMORIALS

Fred B., Brian D., Ken M.,  
Pat O'B., Dick O'L.,  
Pat T., John T.

### ANNIVERSARIES

Island Group: Frances L. 47 years  
High Noon: Mel 23 years  
Lord H. 20 years  
Don 13 years  
Matt F. 11 years  
Tom K. 9 years  
Daphne 4 years  
Jackie B. 3 years  
Ivy & David G. 2 years  
Tim W., Nichole & Jamie 1 year

# profit and loss statement: may 2009

	May 09	Budget	Jan - May 09	Budget		May 09	Budget	Jan - May 09	Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense					Non-Bulk Postage	0	0	84	0
Income					Bulk Mail	200	0	400	577
Contributions from Groups					Postage - Other	0		6	
Group Contributions	10753	9098	64063	66180	Total Postage	\$200	\$0	\$490	\$577
Honors	0	0	166	0	Rent - Office	4320	4283	21602	21415
Total Contributions from Groups	\$10,753	\$9,098	\$64,229	\$66,180	Rent - Other	75	75	300	375
Contributions from Individuals					Access Expenses	0	0	160	517
Individual - Unrestricted	223	85	2903	2597	IFB Literature				
Faithful Fiver	854	598	3974	2211	Sunshine Club	25	0	25	0
Honorary Contributions	337	207	1463	2892	IFB Literature - Other	0	0	0	0
Total Contributions from Individuals	\$1,414	\$890	\$8,340	\$7,700	Total IFB Literature	\$25	\$0	\$25	\$0
Gratitude Month					PI/CPC	13	0	211	0
Gratitude Month - Groups	418	23	3949	3682	Filing/Fees	74	0	94	0
Gratitude Month - Individual	0	0	0	699	Insurance	16	0	16	939
Total Gratitude Month	418	23	3949	4381	Internet Expense	68	75	356	374
Sales - Bookstore	8835	8435	43824	46093	Office Supplies	32	499	1107	1608
Newsletter Subscript.	66	123	209	477	Paper Purchased	0	0	1577	0
Total Income	\$21,485	\$18,569	\$120,550	\$124,831	Software Purchased	0	0	0	0
Cost of Goods Sold					Shipping	-144	36	-26	169
Cost of Books Sold - Shipping	32		81		Printing	0	0	864	0
Cost of Books Sold	6178	5989	31160	32723	Equipment Lease	515	1915	515	3795
Credit Card Processing Fees	239	210	1142	955	Repair & Maintenance	254	186	1545	1825
Total COGS	\$6,449	\$6,199	\$32,383	\$33,678	Security System	0	153	136	293
Gross Profit	\$15,036	\$12,370	\$88,167	\$91,153	Special Events	0	0	0	0
Expense					Payroll Expenses	4		11	
Construction Expense	0	0	734	0	Telephone	266	430	1393	1929
IFB Sponsored Events	120	466	1379	979	Phone Book Listings	84	102	336	509
Unreconciled Bank Adj	0	0	0	0	Utilities	0	0	0	0
Budget Contingency	0	262	0	1310	Travel	0	0	0	0
Special Events Expense	0	0	0	0	Training	0	0	20	0
Reconciliation Discrepancies	0	0	0	0	Bad Checks	0	61	12	199
Employee Expenses					Miscellaneous Expense	0	0	76	0
Wages & Salaries	8790	8864	46021	44320	Total Expense	\$16,598	\$21,081	\$89,586	\$93,033
Employer Tax Expenses	714	778	4601	3890	Net Ordinary Income	-\$1,562	-\$8,711	-\$1,419	-\$1,880
Health Benefits	1184	1396	5920	5566	Other Income/Expense				
Retirement/Annuity Expense	0	0	0	0	Other Income	0	0	0	0
Workers Comp Ins.	0	0	0	0	Interest Income	72	20	447	159
Total Employee Expenses	\$10,689	\$11,038	\$56,541	\$53,776	Total Other Income	\$72	\$20	\$447	\$159
Professional Fees					Other Expense				
Accounting	0	1493	0	1493	Depreciation Expense	0	91	0	455
Computer Consulting	0	0	113	919	Amortization Expense	0	189	0	945
Legal Fees	0	0	0	0	Total Other Expense	\$0	\$280	\$0	\$1,400
Outside Services	0	0	0	0	Net Other Income	\$72	-\$260	\$447	-\$1,241
Total Professional Fees	\$0	\$1,493	\$113	\$2,412	Net Income	-\$1,490	-\$8,971	-\$971	-\$3,121
Bank Charges	-13	7	0	32					
Postage									

# "Living Sober" Still Holds Appeal

## LGBT Conference Celebrates Its 34th Year

by Maureen M.

Over the July 4th weekend, 1,400 lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their friends packed into two floors of the Grand Hyatt for San Francisco's annual Living Sober Conference. For the past 34 years, Living Sober—hosted by LGBT members of A.A. and Al-Anon, and open to all—has been an important gathering place for LGBT alcoholics to come together for joint meetings and workshops, and to hear featured speakers share their experience, strength, and hope.

A lot has changed in 34 years, of course. There are more gay 12-Step meetings than ever before and there is also fellowship online. Regional conventions like Living Sober will always be a draw, though, for alcoholics living in rural areas or any other place where there are few outlets for sober LGBT people to meet except for, as one member puts it, "the old slippery places filled full of slippery people."

And there is something exhilarating about seeing so many of us together. I have two vivid memories from my very own first Living Sober: a bearded burly man all decked out in leathers, holding a teddy bear wearing a little purple "Living Sober" T-shirt in the crook of his arm; and the A.A. musical where a huge audience roared with approval, laughed with recognition, and applauded an immensely talented cast of sober queer alcoholics—our very own Broadway show!

Fellowship like that can be a powerful form of attraction, not promotion. One participant, Richard C., remembered his own first Living Sober: "I thought, if life was like this, I'd stay sober forever!" Mary K., who had the A.A. Big Book—oh my, times have changed—

*"Fellowship like that  
can be a powerful form  
of attraction,  
not promotion"*

loaded into her iPhone, said she liked "being in a roomful of alcoholics, knowing there are so many of us."

Old-timers, too, keep coming back. Donna M. spoke at the women's A.A. meeting about challenges in long-term recovery, like going through a painful divorce and sharing child custody with her same-sex partner: "In long-term sobriety, anyone who has a chunk of time will tell you: it's about surrender, it's about living life on life's terms."

The 100-plus A.A. workshops at the convention included old standbys like "One Bed, Two Programs," "Casual Sex in Sobriety" and "Acceptance Is the Answer." There were also new workshops on topics such as "Couplehood with a Sober Trans Person" and "Unemployment—Working Your Program."

One of the most practical and popular workshops this year was the series of hands-on Fourth Step sessions. These included "Financial Inventory," "Sexual Inventory" and "Emotional Inventory," and provided everyone with pens and paper—so they could get that Fourth Step done! And, this being California, there was even

a yoga workshop. Billy P., one of the sober alcoholics who attended, explained:

"I like to integrate the Twelve Steps with being present, every day."

When I think how huge Living Sober was in years past—in the 1980's attendance was around 5,000—I can get nostalgic and think, "It's not the same." The reality, though, is that as visibility and fellowship among LGBT alcoholics has grown, other conferences have sprung up all over. Now there are thriving Living Sober-style conferences throughout the West Coast and in Honolulu, including Sacramento, San Jose, L.A., San Diego, Orange County and Palm Springs in California alone. In all those other places, someone is walking into his or her first gay A.A. convention for the first time. What a great way to carry the message.



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