

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

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

The Point

2010
4
APRIL

A publication
of the Intercounty Fellowship
of Alcoholics Anonymous

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Giving & Getting

Responsibility

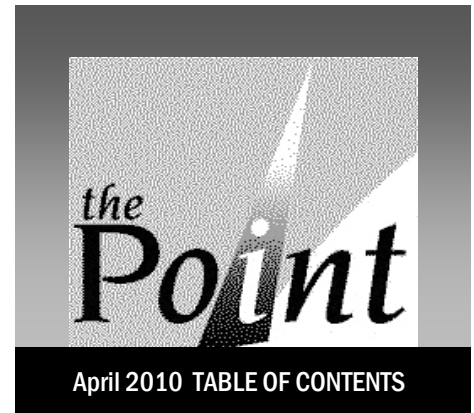
The Point
is published monthly to inform
A.A. members about business and
meeting affairs in the Intercounty
Fellowship of Alcoholics
Anonymous (San Francisco and
Marin Counties). *The Point's* pages
are open to participation by all
A.A. members. Nothing published
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statement of A.A., nor does
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Fellowship Board, the Central
Office, or *The Point* Editorial
Committee. Letters and articles to
help carry the A.A. message are
welcomed, subject to editorial
review by *The Point* Committee.

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April 2010

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
<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 at (415) 674-1821 no less than five business days prior to the event.</i></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>			
4	5	6 <u>FIRST TUE</u> Access Committee Central Office, 6pm	7 <u>FIRST WED</u> Intercounty Fellowship Board 1187 Franklin St./Geary San Francisco (First Unitarian Universalist Church) Orientation 6pm Meeting 7pm
11	12 <u>SECOND MON</u> SF Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC) Committee Central Office, 7pm	13 <u>SECOND TUE</u> <i>The Point</i> Committee Central Office, 5:30pm S.F. Bridging the Gap 1111 O'Farrell St. 6:30pm Marin H&I 1360 Lincoln, San Rafael, 6:15pm SF General Service 1111 O'Farrell St., 8pm	14 <u>SECOND WED</u> 12th Step Committee Central Office, 6:30pm Marin Bridging the Gap 1360 Lincoln Ave San Rafael Alano Club, 6:30pm
18 <u>THIRD SUN</u> Archives Committee Central Office, 2pm Business Meeting followed by Work Day	19 <u>THIRD MON</u> SF Teleservice Central Office, 6:30pm Marin General Service 9 Ross Valley Rd, San Rafael, 8pm	20 <u>THIRD TUE</u> Outreach Committee Central Office, 6:30pm	21
25	26	27 <u>FOURTH TUE</u> <i>The Point</i> Committee Central Office, 5:30pm Marin Teleservice 1360 Lincoln Ave San Rafael Alano Club, 7:30pm	28

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 A.A. in Cyberspace Workshop, Central Office, 6pm	3
8	9 A.A. in Cyberspace Workshop, Central Office, 6pm	10
15 <u>THIRD THU</u> Trusted Servants Workshop Committee Central Office, 6:30pm Please send any ?'s you have about group service to tsw@aasf.org	16	17 San Francisco Public Information/ Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC) Speaker Workshop Central Office, 10am; See Flyer on page 4!
22	23	24 <u>FOURTH SAT</u> General Service CNCA Meeting 320 N. McDowell Petaluma; Business Meeting: 12:30pm
29 <u>LAST THU</u> SF H&I Old First Church, 1751 Sacramento St. SF Orientation: 7:15pm Committee Meeting: 8pm	30	



F. Y. I.

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"We must lose our fear of creditors
no matter how far we have to go,
for we are liable to drink
if we are afraid to face them."

Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 78



Meeting Changes

Meeting Changes:

Mon - Thu	12:15pm	Mission	HIGH NOON, Church, 3261 23rd St./Capp St. (was 1661 15th St./Julian St.)
Tue	8:00pm	Castro	FIRESIDE CHAT GROUP, 100 Diamond St./18th St. (Remove ASL)
Wed	8:00pm	Castro	CASTRO DISCUSSION (SHOW OF SHOWS), 100 Collingwood (was 7pm)
Sat	4:00pm	Novato	THE BARNYARD GROUP, 801 Grant Ave./Reichert St. (was 120 Landing Ct./ Redwood Blvd.)
Fri	2:30pm	Mission	HIGH NOON, Church, 3261 23rd St./Capp St. (was 12:15pm at 1661 15th St./Julian St.)

No Longer Meeting:

Mon	8:00pm	South of Market	MONDAY SPEAKER, 164 Sixth St./Natoma St.
Thu	6:30pm	Sunset	SUNDOWN STEPS, 1400 Judah St./19th Ave.
Thu	7:30pm	South of Market	SIXTH STREET HOME GROUP, 172 Sixth St./Natoma St.
Fri	8:00pm	Bayview	AFRO AMERICAN, 5075 Third St./Revere St.
Sat	10:00am	Pacific Heights	NOT TOO EARLY, 2140 Pierce St./Clay St.

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. **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!**

SPEAKERS WANTED!!

Carry the A.A. message to schools, professional organizations, the medical community, and drunk driving classes.

APRIL 17TH

San Francisco PI/ CPC



(Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community)

SPEAKER WORKSHOP 10:00AM



Reasonable Accommodations Policy: Persons requiring reasonable accommodations, including sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices or print materials in alternate formats should contact Central Office no later than April 12, 2010.





From the Editor

Money

“Money makes the world go around, the world go around, the world go around.” *Cabaret*

“Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” *Gospel of Matthew* (By the way, Matthew was a tax collector.)

“Although gold dust is precious, when it gets in your eyes, it obstructs your vision.” *Hsi-Tang*, Buddhist master


“The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.” (Attributed to Jesus in the epistle to Timothy.)

You may notice we have lots of content in this issue, more than usual. When April rolls around each year, *The Point* has room for extra articles because the year-to-date group contributions that we report (always a quarter behind) frees up page space after the first quarter of the year. The core function of our periodical is to keep our membership informed of the business of the IFB and make its finances, in particular, transparent. So our merry band here at the newsletter focused this issue on the topic of money: getting it, giving it, earning it, losing it, spending it, loving it, hating it, needing it, wanting it, wanting not

to want it. The extra space in our pages cried out for a topic of complexity and importance, and we found it!

So strap on your seatbelt and get ready to be rocketed into the Fourth Dimension of spiritual bookkeeping. Recovery in A.A. requires that we take a new look at our attitudes and practices around money: as an organization, as a group, and as individuals.

The article on spiritual practices (page 17) ably addresses the ongoing “ritual” theme for 2010. The Sunshine Club and H&I Committee are each featured, so if you are looking for some righteous service, listen up! Read “Service: The Pleasure is All Yours” on page 16, if you need some inspiration. Its author, Chris D., has been a poster child for service here at *The Point* as liaison with contributors and as a writer with a unique and provocative point of view. Chris is moving on and he knows we’ll miss him, but expect to see his byline from time to time.

In further staff changes, Charley D., the author of “Are We Broke?” on page 6, will be the new co-chair and IFB rep for our committee. We welcome his counsel and perspective. 

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; for the full editorial policy, please go to www.aasf.org.)



Faithful Fivers are A.A. members who graciously pledge to contribute at least \$5.00 each month toward the support of Central Office. Faithful Fiver contributions go a long way in helping make our vital services possible. We thank the following members:

Alejandro D.	Kathy M.
Andrew Z.	Kevin S.
Ann & Denise	Kristina F.
Arthur A.	Lauren H.
Barbara K.	Laurie L. & Richard L.
Barbara L.	Lelan & Rich H.
Barbara M.	Leo H.
Beverly C.	Lisa M.
Brian O.	Mabel T.
Bruce D.	Marit L.
C.J. H.	Mark A.
Caroline A.	Mark O.
Casey L.	Martha S.
Charles D.	Mary C.
Charlie O.	Matt S.
Craig G.	Michael W.
Dan & Sherry T.	Michael Z.
David J.	Mily T.
David P.	Mitsi H.
David S.	Molly G.
Dennis & Lucy O.	Pat P.
Don N.	Patrick M.
Ed H.	Paul M.
Evan K.	Peg L.
Fay K.	Pene P.
Flossie N.	Penelope & Robert
Frances L.	Phyllis S.
Herman B.	Ralph P.
James M.	Rich M.
Jane K.	Robert C.
Janet B.	Robert W..
Jeanne C.	Sara D.
Jodie S.	Scott C.
John G.	Sheila H.
John M.	Stephen O.
John V.	Steve A.
Karen K.	Steve F.
Kate R.	Stu S.
Kathleen C.	Sylvia D.
Katherine G.	Terry H.
Kathryn M.	Tim M.
	Tom M.
	Tracy F.

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

Are We Broke?

Self-Support Collides With a Projected Budget Deficit

by Charley D.

IFB Rep for the Embarcadero Group

For A.A. of San Francisco and Marin, the year began with the startling revelation that the Inter-County Fellowship Board, the A.A. governing body for this region, had approved a budget that projected a \$21,000.00 deficit. Quite simply, for 2010, the IFB voted to spend more than it planned it to take in. Reaction ranged from surprise to consternation. We all asked, “What went wrong?”

Before you reach for the panic button, a look at some facts and figures may prove calmingly instructive. A.A. counts approximately 18,000 members in San Francisco and Marin. The estimated budget shortfall works out to around \$1.17 per member. In other words, if each member gave an extra \$1.17 to Central Office *this year*, the deficit would disappear. If an additional 350 members became “Faithful Fivers” at the minimum \$5 per month contribution (and, incidentally, they would receive a free subscription to *The Point* for their contribution), that also would alone wipe out the deficit. About 800 A.A. meetings take place regularly in San Francisco and Marin. Only 322 contributed anything at all to Central Office in 2009 (not counting Gratitude Month contributions). If more meetings contributed – even half would likely suffice – the deficit would be gone. In 2009, group contributions fell \$17,000 below what that year's budget anticipated (a shortfall of over 12%) and were on a downward trend as the year ended. Faced with these facts, the IFB foresaw more red ink for 2010.

The IFB maintains a “prudent reserve” of approximately \$120,000.00, an amount that will cover six months' operating expenses. It would take almost six years of identical deficits before we ran out of money. Still, dipping into this “rainy day” fund makes everyone uneasy. No one likes reducing this margin of financial safety. The IFB members, each representing a group in our region, solicited suggestions for solutions from the A.A. membership. Members could also express their views via a link on

“a look at some facts and figures may prove calmingly instructive”

the aasf.org website.

To eliminate a deficit, any business (and here A.A. must act like a business) has two choices: increase revenue or decrease expenses. The IFB considered four possible solutions: (1) cut services; (2) increase literature prices; (3) increase contributions; (4) use the prudent reserve. Obviously, none of these possibilities excludes the others. We can do one, some, or all of them.

Option 1 seemed least attractive to the members and to the IFB. Central Office provides teleservice 24 hours each day, publishes meeting schedules, maintains the aasf.org website, publishes *The Point*, makes accessibility assistance available to members who need it, runs a bookstore that sells A.A. publications, and makes Twelfth Step referrals for members in need. Many of us owe our lives to Central Office and would have perished but for these services.

Option 2 proved almost as unattractive. The membership recoiled at the idea of making A.A. literature any more difficult for alcoholics to obtain.



That left Options 3 and 4 – increase contributions and use the prudent reserve. If contributions increase enough, we need not face the prospect of tapping that fund. Happily, that is exactly what seems to be happening. In the first few months of 2010, members have responded by increasing contributions. If this trend continues, we may not need to use the prudent reserve at all.

More than 60 years ago, A.A. took a vow of institutional poverty. Unlike many organizations that benefit the public, A.A. declines all outside contributions – gifts, bequests, any kind of donation. Members' voluntary contributions, along with sales of literature, provide A.A.'s sole means of support. That means A.A. will always live on the financial edge. A.A.'s self-supporting groups (one of which is the IFB) may accumulate a prudent reserve. The reserve is there for times like these – if we need it. That we may not, thanks to an increase in contributions, should gratify all of us. A.A. works as the result of the support of its members. Please, in these difficult times of the Great Recession, continue to support your organization to the greatest extent you possibly can.



Making Financial Amends

Confronting Spending Obsession Head-on

by Chuck L.

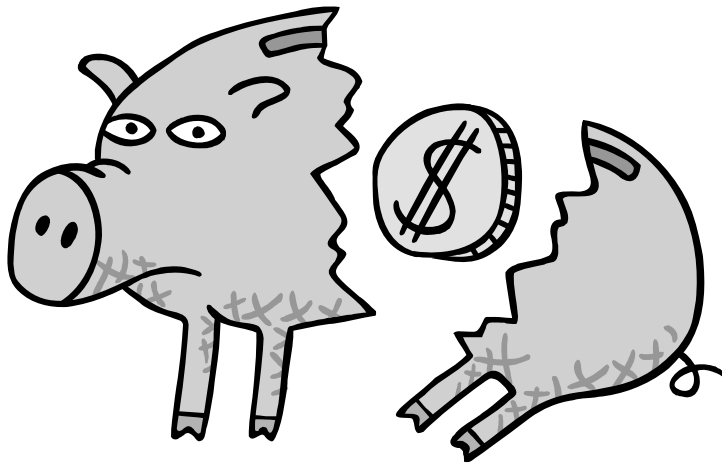
Getting physically sober may be the easy part. Getting the alcohol out of our system and starting to show up for life is all good. We have wreckage in our relationships and amends to make to families, lovers and friends. After we try to get our relationships in order, I think one of the biggest hurdles in recovery that's not talked about a lot is financial amends. People love to talk about their sex lives and all the traumas and dramas of dating in sobriety, but ask someone about their checking account or what they spend their money on, and you can hear a pin drop.

I think one of the biggest myths in recovery is about all the money you save from not drinking. It's been my experience that you just find other things to spend it on. I grew up in an upper class suburban environment and got used to having nice things. I got my first credit card in college, for a local department store. It was a great feeling and made me feel very adult knowing that I could wander into that given store and charge anything I wanted as long as I paid a minimum of say about \$15-25 per month. One credit card begets another. I remember in early

sobriety feeling lonely, insecure and scared at times. Shopping was a great way to fill that emotional void. "I'll feel better sitting in my meeting wearing a new sweater. Besides, I work so hard, I deserve it!" Just as being in A.A. ruins your drinking, being in any Twelve Step program

"I think one of the biggest hurdles in recovery . . . is financial amends."

gets you to recognize compulsive behavior. At 20% interest, those minimum payments accumulate and add up. By the time I was in my early 30's, I had acquired quite a bit of credit card debt, not to mention my



student loan that I kept deferring. Denial is not just the river in Egypt.

I knew that I was hitting a sober bottom in this area of my life. Like with drinking, I had to do more than talk about getting help to curb my spending. I needed to take action. Like any good recovering addict, I sought help from older wiser people in the rooms of A.A. and was directed

to the specific Twelve Step program that deals with money. We're so lucky to live in San Francisco where there are Twelve Step programs for pretty much every compulsive behavior. I started attending meetings in the other program to learn about compulsive spending, under-earning, and living in vagueness about finances.

The somewhat embarrassing part of this was to be willing to be a newcomer again in another program. But there not only did I get support, I also learned very specific tools about having a spending plan and living within my means. This whole process of making financial amends and having and developing a budget didn't happen overnight. I went to a lot of meetings where more experienced people shared their experience, strength and hope with me.

Today I have a spending plan and live within my means. I have a great life and can afford to do things, but I have self-discipline and very practical tools that I use. It took me several years to get my head above water. My taxes especially took a while to get straightened out.

My current financial Achilles heel is San Francisco parking tickets. (I've gone to traffic school several times.) I still can't seem to go a month without getting a parking ticket but I *do* deal with it now: one ticket at a time!

Who knew that when we got sober, we were just starting with the tip of the iceberg!



by Bree L.

The treasurer at our meeting introduced herself as a newcomer and said, "I am now back working the program and want to stay on as treasurer." No one said a word. She continued to collect and disburse our money.

The treasurer's position required two years of sobriety. I called my sponsor. My sponsor said, "That's a Fourth Tradition problem -- introduce a group conscience." I did that and now we have a

new treasurer, but I couldn't see how the treasurer's position affected any Fourth Tradition. It made no sense. The treasurer went out. She wanted to stay put. We got a new one. What did that all have to do with any dumb traditions? Traditions are the things they read while I get my money out. Who pays attention to them, anyway?

Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole. That's the Fourth Tradition.

Our group's rule that a person had to have two years was clear, but it was also important that we abide by our rules -- as bending them opened the door for other meetings to do the same, and who knows what else. Should we fold and say okay, anyone who really wants to do service can stay on? It's all a matter of how badly they want to serve?

Can a person or movement come in and usurp my meeting? A while ago, I attended a heavily religious meeting. The secretary had recently joined a new church and encouraged all of us to accept his God as our Higher Power. I called my sponsor really fast after that one. Did I have to take on

his Higher Power? It was certainly different from my own. My sponsor clarified that the secretary was not speaking for A.A. but that was the secretary's own personal view. I felt his personality stomping on my principles and didn't return to the meeting. That also seemed to go against the Fourth.

The long form for the Fourth Tradition says each group takes care

"Can a person or movement come in and usurp my meeting?"

of its own stuff but when what's being done impacts another group then those groups need to be enlightened.


Karen C. is a member who feels strongly about the Fourth Tradition. She clarifies this further by saying that the crux of the Fourth Tradition is that a meeting can make its own decisions about many items but it cannot impact other meetings or A.A. as a whole. There can be special meetings, such as those for women or gays, but there cannot be Catholic or Buddhist meetings, as these would impact the greater scope of A.A. and bring in broader issues. Karen stressed that an individual's right cannot supersede the group's right and no single person can tell an A.A. group what to do. We can have special interest groups that decide upon their own format, times, location and focus. They can do pretty much what they want -- unless what they do affects A.A. as a whole.

All groups need to be open to any alcoholic who wants to come to a meeting. Karen told of a women's meeting where a man showed up and was promptly asked to leave, as it was a women's meeting. Asking him

When We Disagree

The importance of the Fourth Tradition

to leave went against the Fourth Tradition, she said, as A.A. as a whole was involved: we cannot evict a person who wants to attend a meeting unless they're being disruptive.

In the end, the answers to group problems are the Twelve Traditions, and we resolve those problems through the informed group conscience. 



How to start each day with a positive outlook:

Open a new file on your computer.

Save it as "alcohol abuse and obsession."

Drag it to the recycle bin ("trash" for you Mac folk).

Empty the recycle bin ("trash").

Your computer will ask, "Do you really want to get rid of 'alcohol abuse and obsession'?"

Firmly click YES. Feel better? Good!

Tomorrow you can work on character defects and shortcomings!!!!



BEDSIDE STORIES

by Carole P.

I was sharing my story at an A.A. meeting recently and I mentioned taking part in a Sunshine Club call. When the meeting was over, two visitors from Kansas asked me, “What is the Sunshine Club?”

Here in San Francisco, this Twelfth Step committee has really caught fire, but I was reminded that around the country, not everyone is familiar with the Sunshine Club. It has become such an important part of service in our city that I hope it will be of benefit to others to describe what we have found.

The San Francisco Sunshine Club brings meetings to members of the A.A. Fellowship who are hospitalized or homebound due to illness or injury. Those of us who have been incapacitated for a period of time know how loud the chatter in the mind can get. The Sunshine volunteers are there to

offer an hour of serenity in the midst of all the noise and confusion.

On a typical hospital visit, we scoot our chairs in close to the bed and chat a bit with our fellow member before the meeting begins. When we formally start, we follow the suggested format. We say the Serenity Prayer, then continue with “How It Works.” At this point, the person we are visiting will often visibly relax. Sometimes he or she may close his or her eyes and

A.A.s volunteering in the “Sunshine Club” take meetings to hospitals and shut-ins.



smile while listening. There is comfort in the familiarity of the words and safety in having your A.A. family around you. The catheter tubes and heart monitors fade into the background as the shares become intimate and honest. Often there is laughter; sometimes there are tears. Sometimes the tears are an expression of gratitude.

When a Sunshine meeting request comes in, the volunteers can usually be organized within two or three days. The request might be from someone new in recovery who hasn’t had an opportunity to establish a dependable support network in A.A. Or it may come from an old-timer with dementia who wants the comfort of his A.A. family around him. The request may come from a member in hospice or from a new mom caring for an infant. We also show up for knee injuries, hip replacements, broken feet, hammer-toes and countless other maladies.

When I was drinking, I never wanted to be around anyone who was in pain or needed my help. I was overwhelmed with more than enough pain of my own. However, when I became a member of A.A. and eventually worked the steps, I found out that my job is to be “of maximum service to God and my fellows.” With the help of a Higher Power who is in charge of the results, it became easier for me to be around hospitals and illness.

The Sunshine Club is a clear-cut example of the Twelfth Step in action. As I witness other members of the fellowship volunteer to sit by the bedside of another suffering alcoholic, I know that this program works. It really does.

This article originally appeared in the AA Grapevine in December 2009. It is reprinted here in accordance with Grapevine reprint policy.



Recent Deaths

Conrad G. — Federal Speaker

Tom W. — Sunset 9’ers

LONGTIMER INTERVIEW: JIM A.

The Oldest “Young Person” in San Francisco A.A.

As told to
the Drunk Whisperer

With 42 years sober, Jim A. opens and locks up St. Mary the Virgin Episcopal Church (Union and Steiner) for the Tuesday night Young People’s meeting. He has many sponsees and an active spiritual practice.

Q. What’s your sobriety date?

A. Aug. 11, 1967. I got sober in beautiful downtown Burbank. I moved up here at four years sober. I was going through a divorce, met the girl of my dreams and life was going to change for me.

Q. Was it pulling a geographic or just moving?

A. I think it was pulling a geographic to be absolutely honest. I had to get away from down there. It was World War Three with the first wife. I became diabetic in the middle of it. But I didn’t drink. But I didn’t like it here [in San Francisco]; it wasn’t like in Burbank where people hugged. Now people hug here, too, but then it was very standoffish. I didn’t go to a lot of meetings once I moved. I’d go once every three weeks.

Q. Did you feel yourself getting slippery?

A. Not at all. I felt I was doing very well, just a little suicidal. (laughter) But I had a new role; I was husband, father, provider. We had married a year after I moved up here. But I really got back into A.A. at around 14 years. Before that, I wouldn’t take a chip because I didn’t want to be that grandiose person. But some people chewed me out and said I needed to

take a chip, so I went to Tuesday Downtown and during the countdown, after three, four years, there was no one [accepting a chip], until at 14 years, I stood up, and the place came unglued. I thought, that’s weird, so I started taking chips, to be an example. And now I’m a chip junkie.

Q. So when did your drinking career begin and how did it progress?

“God, grant me the serenity to accept.’ Right there is the whole program—acceptance.”

A. I started drinking when I was about 16. I went in the Navy when I was 17, having dropped out of high school. I got lots of drinking experience in the Navy. After that, I went to work for the gas company, digging ditches. Best job I ever had in my life, I loved it; dug ditches, drank, went back to work. But I just didn’t see myself as a ditch digger for the rest of my life. So I got a job as a salesman for a tobacco company.

Q. Your drinking career probably really took off then.

A. It did because I was terminally shy. Going in and talking to a total stranger in a store and selling something was just the most frightening thing in the world. At the end, I was drinking a six-pack of half-quart cans of Rainier Ale, a gallon of vin rose, and a half pint of vodka, and that would get me through the night.

But I didn’t have a problem; I was just a heavy drinker. (laughter)



Q. Did you get any blowback from the wife or anybody else?

A. Oh, yeah. We only had one fight; it lasted for nine years. We were in marriage counseling for nine years. I was blocking out what she was saying. I did it in my second marriage, too. Found out it was me. We ended up in the second marriage having 25 good years and five bad.

Q. So how did your life change once you got sober?

A. It took a long time. Like I tell my sponsees, when you take that Third Step, you’re going to do it God’s way or you’re going to do it God’s way. It took a quadruple bypass ten years ago to really understand letting go. Abandon yourself to God as you understand Him. Abandon – let it go. The parking meter, your wife, the job, your children, let it go. It’s all going to work. The Serenity Prayer says it all: “God, grant me the serenity to accept.” Period, end of statement. Right there is the whole program: acceptance.

(Continued on page 11)

YOUR HOSPITAL & INSTITUTION COMMITTEE

Moving Toward Accountability and Transparency

by the San Francisco H&I Committee

Through A.A.'s spiritual principle of self-examination, your San Francisco H&I Committee is making some exciting changes. The keystone of this change is a decision to re-model along the structural lines of the General Service Board and the Inter-county Fellowship Board, by asking each San Francisco group to elect an H&I representative. We are not unique in this – it is currently being done in Marin, and to some extent, in San Mateo.

As with General Service and the IFB, the function of this representative is to bring the voice of the individual group to our service committee and to bring vital information from the committee back to the group. This will include current information about H&I facility positions which are open, announcements regarding H&I special events, and how A.A.

members can sign up for an H&I service commitment. He or she will also bring back H&I financial reports to the group, improving the transparency of our fiscal operations.

This commitment entails:

- Attending the monthly H&I committee meeting (last Thursday of the month).
- Making a brief weekly announcement at the group: what H&I does, what volunteers H&I needs and when the monthly meeting is held.
- Attending the group's periodic business meeting as the representative for H&I.

Suggested length of sobriety: 6 months.

Term of service: 2 years.

As anyone who has had an H&I commitment already knows, bringing an A.A. meeting to those confined in

jails, hospitals or rehab centers is one of the most gratifying and rewarding ways of carrying our vital message of recovery. We earnestly hope that our new structure will enable your H&I Committee to better serve the San Francisco community by making us more directly responsible to those we serve (per Tradition Nine) and by providing a more effective forum through which we can exercise our group conscience and thereby obtain our best guidance and direction (per Tradition Two).

Please join us in our efforts by asking your group to elect an H&I representative – or maybe even volunteer for the position yourself.

Monthly H&I Committee Meetings are held at 8PM on the last Thursday of each month at Old First Church (Van Ness at Sacramento). Beginner orientation starts at 7:15PM; you can also visit us on the web at www.handinorcal.org.



(Continued from page 10)

Q. How do you reconcile acceptance and doing the next right thing?

A. It's prayer and conversation. My prayers are often conversations with God. Sometimes I forget that. That's the best way for me rather than, "God, what do I do?" That puts him out there. My God is in here (points to self). I think we're all part of God.

Q. What can you tell me about A.A. history in San Francisco?

A. Young people's A.A. in San Francisco used to be a wild and hairy group [in the '70s]. They literally ripped the towel rack off the wall in the men's room. I didn't go to those meetings for that reason; they were a

little too crazy. And I was a snob, as we tend to be at about four or five years sober. I thought they weren't spiritual then. It was more of a dating service.

Q. Isn't Young People's a dating service now?

A. Not like it used to be. It was the '60s, the '70s. Everyone was running around topless on Union St., with see-through blouses and stuff like that. Times were a little different then, even in A.A. When I went back to Young People's – got mad at my wife and was going to drink – I jumped in my car, but where was I going to go? Didn't know where a bar or liquor store was located, so I

ended up at the Tuesday night meeting. There was a gay guy sitting on my left and a single gal on my right, and they were both trying to pick me up and I thought, this is kind of neat. They were both talking about God. And I went back to that meeting and got more involved from there; that was a long time ago. Yet now Young People's on Tuesday night is my home group.

Jim A. talked about many San Francisco A.A. folks in his interview. If you'd like to know more, Central Office has Jim's interview (transcript and audio) in its archives. Contact Peter at Central Office.



The Magic of the Fourth Step

When a Comic Book Costs \$800

By Bill

The Fourth Step can cause a tiny shift of perception, or trigger an internal landslide of change. But sometimes the smallest amends can have a profound impact on relationships.

At the age of sixteen, my drinking and using was out of control. One afternoon, while particularly high, I had a moment of inspiration and stole one of my brother's prize comic books. Not just any comic book, but *The Fantastic Four*, issue 48, which contained the first appearance of the Silver Surfer. As a skateboarder and stoner, the Surfer held a certain appeal – a trippy silver man with seemingly infinite power, riding a cosmic surfboard through deep space.

When the local comic book shop gave me fifty bucks for it, I was even more delighted. I thanked the man behind the counter, gave a small nod to the Surfer, and headed straight to a nearby liquor store. I had a local biker buy me a twelve-pack of Coors tall, and rode my skateboard over to my pot dealer. Within a few hours the money was gone, and I was on to my next score.

Later, my brother asked if I knew where the comic book was. I nonchalantly said I didn't know. But we both knew.

Many years later, I entered A.A. I became part of the Nursery Group in Walnut Creek, a men's group with a strong focus on the steps. In the span of my first year, I completed three full

inventories. I was a fanatic for detail, and did them continually. Eventually, I felt I had done a thorough job, and maintained my program through regular Tenth Steps.

"It all came flooding back. I realized I owed my brother an amends."

San Francisco. I was walking down Haight Street one afternoon, and came across a comic book store. I went inside, looked up – and there it was. A pristine copy of *The Fantastic Four* #48, hanging in a protective sleeve on the wall.

It all came flooding back. I realized I owed my brother an amends. He was having a birthday that weekend, so the timing was perfect. I strode up to the clerk, and asked to buy the copy on the wall.

He turned to me and said, "Well, this one is a bit rare, and given the condition, quite expensive." I asked how much, and he looked me in the eye.

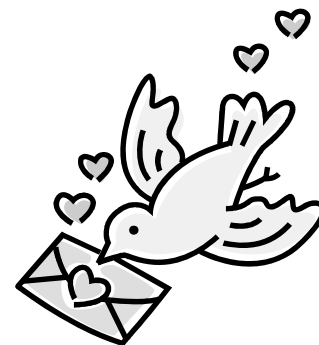
"Eight hundred dollars."

I smiled. By yet another odd coincidence, I had recently received a bonus check at work. I pulled out my wallet, and bought it on the spot.

That weekend, I handed my brother a small, flat, carefully wrapped gift. He

Years later, after a decade of sobriety, I moved from the East Bay to

noon, and came book store. I went



Letters to the Editor

Celebrating Sobriety:

The Gift of Self-Support

by Chris L.

I spend about six weeks to two months in Maui each year. On birthdays in Maui A.A., they give an envelope addressed to General Service in New York to the birthday person, suggesting a donation of \$1 for each year of sobriety.

Central Office might consider giving these out along with the meeting schedules: an envelope addressed to Central Office, with a request that they be given to each person that announces a birthday in a meeting. I always give myself a sobriety birthday present – one year it was a subscription to the Grapevine, another year it was membership in the Alano Club, another year it was doing 90 meetings in 90 days again.

was surrounded by friends and family, and opened the present.

He saw what was inside. Looked up at me. And once again, we both knew. He gave me a huge hug. And another small weight was lifted.



Meet THE MEETING

by Bree L.

This twenty-six year old, closely-knit “beginners” meeting stresses the importance of having a supportive family of alcoholics available to help maintain one’s sobriety. Sherri P. tells of attending this meeting at the AME church for over eight years and appreciates how everyone genuinely cares about what happens to its members. She attends with her sponsor, her grand-sponsor and women she sponsors, which certainly resembles a family.

Afro American Beginners Meeting is the oldest African American group in San Francisco (and one of the older meetings in the city). It was started by Michael F., Herman B. and Irma M. as an offshoot of the Friday Afro American meeting at 8 PM in the Bayview (at 5075 Third St. at Revere and currently seeking a new location).

The Saturday night Afro American meeting is listed as a “beginners” meeting, indicating the lack of long-term sobriety when it began. The

AFRO AMERICAN BEGINNERS

originators attended with their sponsors but no one had more than two years. The name of the meeting, Afro American, also reflects the fact that the founding members were young adults of the 1960’s. The name wasn’t a fad although it did remind members of their roots. When they first started, these were the only two African American meetings available in the city. Non-African Americans have always been welcome at both meetings; however, it wasn’t until five years ago or so that they actually became integrated.

“It beat bar-hopping,” claims Martial Y., who tells of originally traveling on Muni from the Tenderloin to attend. After attending regularly, he noticed a rental around the corner and moved into that location and coincidentally closer to the meeting. Another member then moved into the same building and after a few more years, they bought the building. It was a wise transaction and helped to insure their sobriety. Martial claims that when he first came, there were only two very new members and their sponsors. All

of them were new in the program.

A second regular, Bill S., started coming when the meeting was barely two years old. He remembers that for a long time there were only five or six in attendance. This produced a lot of camaraderie that extends to this day. Some went to both meetings: Friday in the Bayview and the Saturday meeting on Capitol. They called themselves the “Hi and Dry Club.”

The best times come with the annual anniversary meetings, according to Andre F. Last year was the twenty-sixth anniversary party/potluck. Members who have moved away or gravitated to other meetings return for connection and celebration. The twenty-seventh anniversary party will be this coming June 26, 2010.

The Afro American Beginners Meeting is at 8 PM on Saturday night at AME Church, located at 627 Capitol Ave. (at Minerva St.) It is a speaker/discussion meeting. (This location is served by Muni M-Ocean View streetcar and #54 bus.)



Would you like to subscribe to The Point?

\$12.00 for one year — 12 issues!!!

PLEASE MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO : INTERCOUNTY FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS



TAURUS (April 20 - May 20)

Drinking style: Taurus prefers to drink at a leisurely pace, aiming for a mellow glow rather than a full-on zonk. Since a truly intoxicated Taurus is a one-person stampede, the kind of bull-in-a-china-shop inebriate who spills red wine on white carpets and tells fart jokes to employers, the preference for wining and dining (or Bud and buddies) to body

shots and barfing is quite fortunate for the rest of us. This is not to say that the Bull is by any means a teetotaler – god, no. A squiffy Taurus will get, er, gregarious (full of loudmouth soup, some would say) and is extremely amusing to drag to a karaoke bar when intoxicated.



IFB meeting summary – march 2010

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

The following meetings (and *service entities*) 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

A is for Alcoholic	Doing the Deal	High Sobriety	Mission Terrace	Some Are Sicker Than Others	Valencia Smokefree
Any Lengths	Each Day a New Beg. (Sun)	Join the Tribe	Noon Smokeless	Steppin Up	Walk of Shame
Back to Basics	Early Start	Keep Coming Back	On Awakening	Sunset 9'ers (Sat.)	We Care
Beginner's Meeting	Embarcadero Group	Let It Be Now	One Liners	Sunset 9'ers (Sun.)	Women Who Drank. . .
Bernal New Day	Extreme Makeover	Living Sober With HIV	Parent Trap 2	Sunset Early Morning Group	Women's Promises
Blue Book Special	Fireside Chat	Lush Lounge	Queers, Crackpots & Fallen Women	Sunset Speaker Step	
Boys Night Out	Friday All Groups	Marina Discussion	Reality Farm	They Stopped In Time	General Service Marin
Came to Park	Friendly Circle Beginners	Men's Gentle Touch	Saturday Easy Does It	Tiburon Haven Group	H&I Marin
Code Blue	Goldmine Group	Mid Morning Support	Serenity Seekers	Tiburon Men's Stag	Marin Teleservice
Come and Get it	High Noon (Sunday)	Mill Valley Log Cabin 7am	SFPOA	Too Early	NCCAA 2010
Cow Hollow Men's	High Noon (Thursday)	Miracles (Way) Off 24th St.	Sober 5150's	Tuesday Chip	SF General Service

Following is an unofficial summary of actions, information, upcoming business and service opportunities discussed at the March 2010 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.

The purpose of the Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous is to carry on the movement of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) in keeping with the intent and spirit of the Fellowship as exemplified in the books *Alcoholics Anonymous, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, and *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*.

The Intercounty Fellowship has been organized by, and is responsible to, the member groups of A.A. in San Francisco and Marin for the purpose of coordinating the services which individual groups cannot provide.

The monthly IFB meeting was held on Wednesday March 3, 2010 at the First Unitarian Universalist Church, 1187 Franklin Street, San Francisco. Next month's meeting will be Wednesday April 7, 2010 at the same location.

IFB Reports:

IFB Chair Report - Michael S:

Chair presented some thoughts regarding his qualifications and experience and how he has used them as chair of the IFB. He asked that dissenting opinions regarding

his actions be respectfully discussed, keeping the welfare of the IFB in mind. He encouraged IFB reps to email their ideas to him at chair@aasf.org.

Treasurers Report – treasurer@aasf.org

Group response to the projected 2010 deficit has been tremendous. December and January contributions were both over budget. However, if group contributions return to projected levels, a deficit may still occur in 2010. Please thank your groups for their contributions and urge them to continue contributing in order to ensure the current and future stability of your central office and the IFB.

Central Office Manager's report:

Central Office moved the website to a new web server and hosting service. Hopefully this will improve website response.

IFB reps are the communications exchange between groups and the IFB. Please remember to not only report IFB actions to your groups, but also to communicate information from the groups to Central Office. We want to be able to respond to your groups needs proactively.

Please ask trusted servants to update their information with Central Office so that they can be contacted if need be.

If submitting reports in writing to the IFB please remove last names as the reports are posted on the Internet.

Central Office Committee report:

The COC has been evaluating staff health insurance annual, working on staff evaluations and the purchase and installation of a new domain server.

Committee Reports

Access Committee is working on recommendations to put before the board pertaining to hearing impaired meetings and translation for deaf AA Members.

Archives Committee – meets the 3rd Sunday of each month at Central Office 2 PM. They have found it challenging to date some of the documents they are archiving. Please try to put dates on literature your groups produce that may end up in the archives.

The Point is always looking for volunteers to write articles.

Website Committee – they have a new content manager. They continue to work on website revisions and need volunteers to help.

Trusted Servants Workshop Committee – there will be a Secretary's Workshop March 21 from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

Fellowship Committee is forming to put on Founders Day 2010. Please volunteer to help. The first meeting is March 20 at 11:00 AM at Central Office.

Other Business

The IFB approved expenditure of \$4,000

(Continued on page 15)

Individual Contributions

to Central Office were made through March 15, 2010 honoring the following members:

ONGOING MEMORIALS

Fred B., Steven D. Ken M., Dick O'L., Lyle W.

ANNIVERSARIES

Beverly C. 30 years
Veronica M. 29 years
Karen C. 23 years

High Noon:

Bill B. 21 years, Johnny G. 12 years, Joe O. &
Michelle T. 7 years, Ted M. 6 years, Robert C., Valeria &
Jessica T. 4 years, Janice E. 3 years, Serina & Chris 1 year

Join the Tribe: Tim M. 10 years

Oakland, CA: Lisa M. 10 years

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

Stephen E. secretary@aasf.org

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

CENTRAL OFFICE COMMITTEE

Brad P. 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

Charley D. thepoint@aasf.org

ACCESS COMMITTEE

Muriel P. access@aasf.org

TRUSTED SERVANTS

WORKSHOP COMMITTEE

Ted R. tsw@aasf.org

WEBSITE COMMITTEE

Michael P. website@aasf.org

PI/CPC COMMITTEE


Glen R. picpc@aasf.org

SF TELESERVICE COMMITTEE

Steve R. sfteleservice@aasf.org

for the purchase and installation of new domain server.

STANDING REQUEST: Let your groups know about IFB membership opportunities- great service - 1 year sobriety recom-

mended. There are many committees that need members. The IFB orientation precedes the monthly IFB meeting - 6 PM the first Wednesday of each month. 

spring fling
a drag thing

Saturday, April 17th

6:00pm-7:00pm ~ Meeting

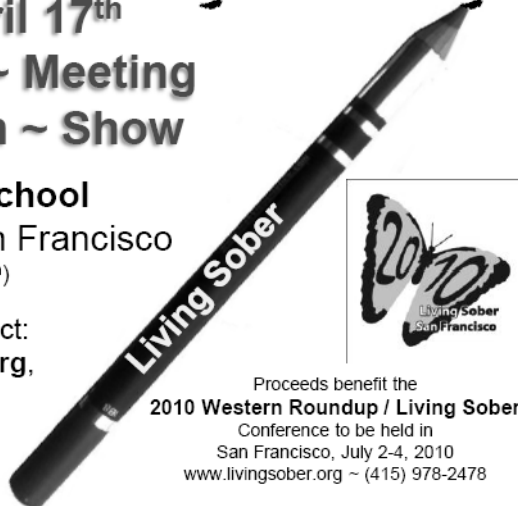
7:30pm-10:30pm ~ Show

Everett Middle School

450 Church Street, San Francisco
(between 16th & 17th)

If you wish to perform, contact:
fundraising@livingsober.org,
or (415) 626-2022

Donation: \$15/adult, \$5/child



Proceeds benefit the
2010 Western Roundup / Living Sober
Conference to be held in
San Francisco, July 2-4, 2010
www.livingsober.org ~ (415) 978-2478

aa group contributions

<u>Fellowship Contributions</u>	<u>Jan. 09</u>	<u>Marin Contributions</u>	<u>Jan. 09</u>	<u>San Francisco Contributions</u>	<u>Jan. 09</u>
Anonymous Group	500	Thursday Night Speaker Th 830pm	1,194	Joys of Recovery Tu 8pm	29
Contribution Box	131	Thursday Night Speaker Th 830pm	395	Light Brigade Discussion Su 7pm	120
IFB	159	Wednesday Night Candlelight W 8pm	176	Like A Prayer Su 4pm	100
MCYPAA	250	Women on Monday M 7pm	85	Live and Let Live Su 8pm	148
San Francisco Young People in A.A.	125	Working Dogs W 1205pm	406	Living Sober W 8pm	306
Total Fellowship Contributions	\$1,165	Total Marin Contributions	\$10,442	Luke's Group W 8pm	70
				Meeting Place Noon W 12pm	100
				Midnight Meditation Sat 12am	24
Marin Contributions		San Francisco Contributions		Monday Monday M 1215pm	80
12 & 12 Study Sa 815am	226	6am Dry Dock 7D	53	Noon Smokeless W 12pm	105
Attitude Adjustment 7D 7am	450	6am Dry Dock W	55	Parkside Th 830pm	67
Awakenings Sa 830am	33	7am Speaker Discussion Th 7am	100	Pax West Th 12pm	268
Be Still AA Su 12pm	46	830am Smokeless F 830am	208	Potrero Hill 12 x 12 M 630pm	67
Closed Women Step Study Tu 330pm	176	A New Start F 830pm	603	Room to Grow F 8pm	135
Cover to Cover W 800pm	197	Alumni W 830pm	41	Rule 62 W 10pm	85
Crossroads Sun 12pm	749	As Bill Sees It Tu 1210pm	73	Serenity House	150
Girls Night Out W 815pm	75	Beginners' Step Study Sat 630pm	220	Serenity Seekers M 730pm	226
Gratitude Tu 8pm	424	Beginners Meeting (Old Sutter St) Sat	432	Sober Across the Board M-Sa 830am	100
Happy Destiny F 7pm	83	Bernal New Day 7D	299	Sometimes Slowly Sa 11am	127
Happy, Joyous & Free 5D 12pm	1,250	Big Book Basics F 8pm	127	Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag	535
High & Dry W 12pm	104	Blue Book Special Su 11am	83	Sunday Night 3rd Step Group 5pm	384
Island Group Th 8pm	167	Chips Ahoy Tu 12pm	56	Sunday Night Castro SD Su 8pm	358
Marin City Groups 5D 630pm	123	Cocoanuts Su 9am	23	Sunset 11'ers Sa	57
Marin Young People F 830pm	30	Code Blue Big Book Study W 7pm	86	Sunset 9'ers Tu	2
Mill Valley 7D 7am	750	Common Welfare Th 8pm	151	Sunset 9'ers W	150
Mill Valley Discussion W 830pm	219	Cow Hollow Men's Group W 8pm	218	Ten Years After Su 6pm	207
Monday Nooners M 12pm	389	Design for Living Sat 8am	378	The Parent Trap M 1230pm	153
Newcomers Step M 730pm	307	Each Day a New Beginning Th 7am	553	Thursday Morning Men's BB Study	575
Noon Hope F 12pm	189	Each Day a New Beginning Tu 7am	279	Walk of Shame W 8pm	81
On Awakening 7D 530am	525	Each Day a New Beginning W 7am	299	We Care Tu 12pm	111
Pathfinders Tu 12pm	200	Firefighters & Friends Tu 10am	446	Wharfrats Th 815pm	26
Primary Purpose W 830pm	140	Fireside Chat Group Tu 8pm	176	Women's 10 Years Plus Th 615pm	107
Refugee Th 12pm	60	Friday All Groups F 830pm	269	Women's Kitchen Table Tu 630pm	108
Six O'Clock Sunset Th 6pm	197	Friendly Circle Beginners Su 715pm	103	Women's Promises F 7pm	267
Spiritual Testost. Sun Men's Stag Su	175	Happy Destiny Sa 630pm	38	Women Living Sober Sa 10am	120
Steps To The Solution W 715pm	102	High Noon Friday 1215pm	59	YAHOO Step Sa 1130am	140
Stinson Beach Fellowship Th 8pm	100	High Noon Friday 1215pm	15	Total SF Contributions	\$11,675
Sunday Friendship Sun 7pm	200	High Noon Friday 1215pm	40		
Sunday Night Corte Madera Sun 8pm	200	High Noon Friday 1215pm	32	Total Group Contributions	\$23,282
Sunlight of the Spirit Th 7pm	100	High Noon Tuesday 1215pm	174		
The Fearless Searchers F 8pm	38	High Noon Tuesday 1215pm	132		
There is a Solution Tu 6pm	166	Huntington Square W 630pm	167		

Spirit Recognizing Spirit

How Ritual Works in A.A. and Other Spiritual Practices

by Michael F.

Rituals are a repetition of the things that seem to have worked in the past. I remember the comfort of sitting in meetings, hearing the readings, week after week. Pouring coffee, smoking cigarettes, as people talked and talked. Sometimes I understood part of what they said.

Many times it was as if they were reading or speaking in Latin, performing some ritual I couldn't

comprehend. The part that seemed magical was that I changed. I changed by sitting in the room while the meeting went on. I changed even more as I began to speak and pay more attention to what was being said. I liked the change. It made me feel better about myself. I didn't know why that was happening. To this day, I still don't quite know the how. I'm just sure about the fact that it happens.

Sometime in the first year I read in the Big Book that we are granted a reprieve contingent on our spiritual state. That left me hungry for more of this spiritual thing. I really didn't know much about it, how it worked or why. Something inside recognized that more was going on than the words. I proceeded to do what you people told me to do: work the steps, get a sponsor and continue to attend meetings.

My intellect came back to life. It was kind of dormant, especially at the end of the drinking and for the beginning of the sobriety. Feelings woke up, work kept happening, and I was thinking I'd been healed, and there

was nothing else that could be better. I learned differently fairly soon. As time goes by, each year of sobriety brings its own benefits and problems. Intellect can be a double-edged sword. Emotions bring both joy and pain. I was always grateful for meetings to attend where I could sit and hear familiar words repeated

“the Big Book said we don't have a corner on the spiritual market”

again and again. The calming, comforting cadence let my rampaging thinking or thundering emotions take a back seat to my spirit that wanted to be there, be still and recognize the workings of the spirit in the others in the room.

Years went by. I'd done the work of recovery. I got better jobs in the real world. I made friends. I got a good portion of my family back. One thing I kept looking for was what had healed me in those first meetings. People in the meetings and even the Big Book said we don't have a corner on the spiritual market. I began looking for this spiritual thing in other places.

I went to A.A. conventions and roundups. I sat in Buddhist temples, as still as I could be. I ate vegetarian food at Hindu co-ops. I took classes at the local Catholic Church, looking back to the religion of my youth as suggested in one of our books. I even went to a retreat on Catholic mysticism, thinking to find the best of what they had. That led me on a search that has lasted for years — not so much being Catholic, but

reading and researching that spiritual practice.

In Texas, in the 80's, I fell into a group that worked with American Indian spirituality. Weekly meditations with someone else telling me how long to sit still improved my ability to meditate. They took me to a sweat lodge. The medicine man told me if I kept my thoughts pure, the heat from the rocks wouldn't hurt me. With naked bodies sitting around me in a cramped room, it was difficult. After many times emerging with red skin, I got the hang of it, and learned to sit without my body giving the directions. Lots of ritual involved there.

One thing that has remained constant throughout this journey: the spiritual feeling at those first meetings that kept me coming back has been the beacon that has guided me. The God of my understanding doesn't have a lot of specifics to tie him/her/it down. I can't figure it out. I'm not that smart. I can't love, hate or admire my way into knowing it. Those are feelings. Sometimes they change in a flash. The “feelings” that recognized the prize in that first meeting are somehow deeper and bigger than the ones I walk around with every day. They are also more subtle and delicate than my imagination can describe. Spirit recognizing spirit.

During times of trial, times of joy and times of sorrow, I have always been able to return to the rooms and find that spirit. I don't always like the people there. I don't always like what is said. Nonetheless, I always feel the spirit begin to move as someone reads, “Rarely have we seen a person fail ...”.



profit and loss statement: January 2010

	<u>Jan 10</u>	<u>Budget</u>		
Ordinary Income/Expense			Total Professional Fees	\$0
Income			Postage	
Contributions from Groups			Non-Bulk Postage	0
Group Contributions	23235	14246	Bulk Mail	<u>0</u>
Honors	<u>47</u>		Total Postage	\$0
Total Contributions from Groups	\$23,282	\$14,246	ASL Expense	0
Contributions from Individuals			Rent - Office	4493
Individual - Unrestricted	1198	1859	Rent - Other	0
Faithful Fiver	956	573	Access Expenses	450
Honorary Contributions	<u>399</u>	<u>175</u>	IFB Literature	0
Total Contributions from Individuals	\$2,553	\$2,607	PI/CPC	21
Gratitude Month			Filing/Fees	25
Gratitude Month - Groups	2845		Insurance	1740
Gratitude Month - Individual	0		Internet Expense	55
Gratitude Month - Other	<u>0</u>	<u>1073</u>	Office Supplies	86
Total Gratitude Month	\$2,845	\$1,073	Paper Purchased	202
Sales - Bookstore	9715	5733	Shipping	15
Newsletter Subscript.	<u>33</u>	<u>10</u>	Equipment Lease	0
Total Income	\$38,427	\$23,669	Repair & Maintenance	105
Cost of Goods Sold			Payroll Expenses	4
Cost of Books Sold - Shipping	0	12	Telephone	250
Cost of Books Sold	6193	3956	Phone Book Listings	87
Credit Card Processing Fees	<u>291</u>	<u>147</u>	Miscellaneous Expense	<u>0</u>
Total COGS	\$6,484	\$4,115	Total Expense	<u>\$19,359</u>
Gross Profit	\$31,943	\$19,554	Net Ordinary Income	<u>\$12,584</u>
Expense			Other Income/Expense	
Inventory Adjustments	402		Other Income	
Sunshine Club	20		Interest Income	74
Reconciliation Discrepancies	0		Total Other Income	<u>\$74</u>
Employee Expenses			Other Expense	
Wages & Salaries	8790	8797	Depreciation Expense	0
Employer Tax Expenses	1430	1340	Amortization Expense	<u>0</u>
Health Benefits	<u>1184</u>	<u>1283</u>	Total Other Expense	<u>\$0</u>
Total Employee Expenses	\$11,405	\$11,420	Net Other Income	<u>\$74</u>
Professional Fees			Net Income	<u>\$12,657</u>
Computer Consulting	<u>0</u>			<u>\$1,037</u>

I Ran from the IRS....and Found Recovery

By James M.

When we think of making amends, the IRS isn't usually the first on the Ninth Step list. Nobody likes paying taxes. I was (and am) the same. But the IRS has a way of putting themselves on the list and insisting on

staying there until you make amends.

When I was drinking, there was a year in which I attempted to get involved in a business venture. It was with a fellow alcoholic, and nothing came of it except some wasted money that I thought could be a

deductible business expense. I didn't know what to do about it and, being an active alcoholic, didn't even hallucinate the possibility of asking for outside help. So I did the usual thing-- nothing. I just didn't file. Time went by, I forgot about it. I had more

(Continued on page 19)

SERVICE

The pleasure is all yours

by Chris D.

Hi, there. I'm here to share with you what I feel service is all about. Not that I *know* what service is all about but just how I *feel*. What is it they say: just because I feel something doesn't make it true? But sometimes what I feel can be true!

In nearly twenty years of practicing sobriety, I have had several service commitments. I have had the honor of sponsoring guys, being secretary of meetings, volunteering at sober events, signing leases for renting meeting space, helping develop a sober living facility and even bringing cookies to a meeting. This is just a sample of the types of service available to us, the sober members of Alcoholics Anonymous. Without you, I would still be out there, drunk, if I were lucky; dead, if I weren't. The service of all those before me, going back to Bill and Bob, have made it possible for me to enjoy the sobriety I have today. The service I take on today is the only way I can give back



“Just raise your hand. The rewards, in my experience, are tenfold.”

that which was freely given to me.

So, why do I feel the way I do about service? Because it makes me feel good. It makes me feel useful and I get a sense of belonging. I belong to a subset of humankind that for the most part is very fortunate. Where would you be today if A.A. did not exist? At times I cringe at the thought of where my life would be (that is, if I were alive) if I did not stumble into the rooms of A.A. The time my sponsors have spent with me would have bankrupted me if I had to pay them (some are sicker than others!). What is the price we would have had to pay if there were no A.A.?

All it has taken is a commitment to my own sobriety and a desire to give back a small portion of the love and support that I have received. The simple type of service that is at our feet is plentiful. The offers come to us at nearly every meeting we attend; just raise

your hand. The rewards, in my experience, are tenfold. Sure, there's a bit of a time commitment, but consider the gift of giving, not to mention what you will get back!

But most of all, I feel (remember what they say about feelings) that God is watching me, and if I continue being of service and stay sober, I might get the first tee time on that great golf course that I know is in heaven. I guess the only problem with that is that I will have to keep an honest score – for once!

The best of luck to all of you and God knows, we could use your help!



(Continued from page 18)

important fish to drown.

Fast forward. I've recently gotten sober. I'm out of work, very low on money. I get a letter from the IRS. "Dear taxpayer. We notice you didn't file. You owe us thousands of dollars. Sincerely, The Feds." I'm in a panic. I talk about it with *lots* of program people. Someone says, "I know a guy in the program who's a CPA who helps people make financial amends." I go to see the sober CPA, who works with me to file. I

“You face your problems as soon as you can, deal with them as best you can, and get them behind you as fast as you can.”

didn't think of it as taking a fearless and searching financial inventory at the time, but it certainly was a fact-finding and fact-facing process. I was still working on the rest of my Fourth Step. I end up paying hundreds, not thousands, of dollars-- while still playing strictly by the rules. And come to think of it-- I don't think the IRS was

ever on my resentment list!

One of the things I've learned in sobriety is that honesty is a stress-reduction technique. You're not worried about who is going to discover your lies, when you'll get in trouble, how big the trouble is going to be, or any of that. You face your problems as soon as you can, deal with them as best you can, and get them behind you as fast as you can. If you need help, get help: you don't have to do it alone.



April 2010

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