

# the Point

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

from Chapter Five of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous

2010  
**JULY**

A publication of the Intercity Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous

A publication of the  
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## *The Final Frontier*

# *Freedom in A.A.*

## *Liberty for the Libertine*



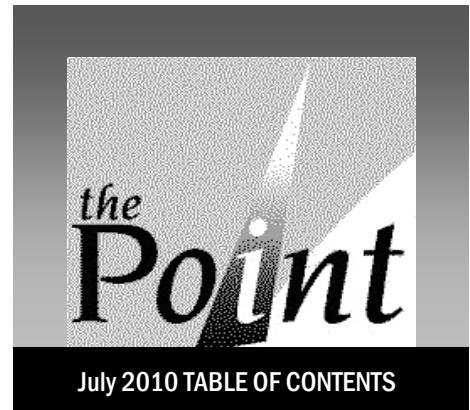
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The Point is published monthly to inform AA members about business and meeting affairs in the Intercity Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous (San Francisco and Marin Counties). The Point's pages are open to participation by all AA members. Nothing published herein should be construed as a statement of AA, nor does publication constitute endorsement of AA as a whole, the Intercity 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.

# July 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>			
   			
4  Living Sober See Flyer on Page 4	5  Holiday Central Office Closed	6  <u>FIRST TUE</u> Access Committee Central Office, 6pm	7  <u>FIRST WED</u> Intercounty Fellowship Board Meeting 1187 Franklin St. 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  SF 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  <b>SF PI/CPC Speaker Workshop</b> See Flyer on Page 15
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 Living Sober See Flyer on Page 4	3 Living Sober See Flyer on Page 4
8	9	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
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	31



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“to gain a vision of humility as the avenue to true freedom of the human spirit... takes most of us a long, long time.”

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 73*



## Meeting Changes

### New Meeting:

Fri 12:00pm Castro CASTRO NOONERS, Castro Country Club, 4058 18th St./Hartford St. (CH, SD)

### Meeting Changes:

Sun 8:00am Hayes Valley AS BILL CC'S IT - MOTORCYCLE MTG, 1748 Market, 1st & 3rd Sundays only (was 7:30am)  
Wed 1:00pm Inner Sunset BYOL, 1329 7th Ave/Irving St. (was Tennis Clubhouse, 100 Bowling Green Dr., Golden Gate Park)

### No Longer Meeting:

Thu 9:00am Castro STRAITJACKET, 3400 16th St/Church St.  
Thu 7:30pm Bayview STAYING SOBER, 1601 McKinnon/3rd 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!

### BROADS WITHOUT BOOZE XV



#### Women's Luncheon & Speaker Meeting

**WHEN:** Sunday, July 25th, 2010

11:30 a.m. - Fellowship / Lunch - 12:00 p.m. Sharp

Open Speaker Meeting - 1:00-2:00 p.m.

(Speaker: Kathy Y., Tri-Valley Fellowship, East Bay)

*NOTE: Attending meeting only?*

*Please arrive no earlier than 12:45 p.m.*

**WHERE:** United Irish Cultural Center  
2700 - 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue (near Sloat), San Francisco, CA

**Cost for lunch - \$26.00 (includes tax & tip)**

Contact Linda W. at [linda\\_gemini@yahoo.com](mailto:linda_gemini@yahoo.com) about payment.

*Payment must be received no later than July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010*

### Western Roundup Living Sober

**Friday – Sunday, July 2-4**

*Grand Hyatt in Union Square, San Francisco*

Hosted by GLBT members of A.A. with Al-

Anon participation

Speakers and Workshops

for the LGBT Recovery Community

*AA/Al-Anon Musical — Arts & Crafts  
Fellowship and Fun*



Registration \$65

Sunday Brunch \$35

Saturday Social \$5

[www.livingsober.org](http://www.livingsober.org)

## From the Editor

# Freedom

"We ask especially for freedom from self-will . . ." p. 87, *Alcoholics Anonymous*

"We found that freedom from fear was more important than freedom from want." p. 122, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*

Ever notice how in A.A. "freedom" is usually followed by "from," not "to"? In recovery, we are looking for freedom *from* the bondage of self, rather than freedom *to* indulge our desires – remember where *that* got us? Our Fourth of July "Freedom" issue features stories about struggling for that elusive state ("Freedom from Self-Imprisonment," p. 6), and being free at the institutional level from the paradoxical slavery of financial means ("Seventh Tradition," p. 8). Our newest committee member, Lisa C., writes about her drinking career that ended on July Fourth and her H&I commitment that further freed her (p. 9) in a story that should encourage you, dear

reader, to examine your own service commitments and say "yes" the next time you are asked, because, in Lisa's words, "that is what I was taught to do in A.A."

"Meet the Meeting" this month features, appropriately for Independence Day, the group *Serenity in the Park* (formerly *Vets and Yets*), that meets at the Presidio, whose earliest members are veterans of our military services. A brief history and reflection on the other big July event, the Living Sober conference, is on p. 7. Finally, on p. 19, read the article on freedom from character defects ("Believing in Steps Six and Seven") that gives good guidance on these somewhat subtle steps. "Rituals of Recovery," "Interview with Longtimer," and the newest feature, "Help@aasf.org" all await your attention. Of course, don't miss the IFB materials and calendar of events. Happy reading!

tP

## EDITORIAL POLICY

*The Point* is published monthly to inform A.A. members about business and meeting affairs of the Intercountry 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](http://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:

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# Freedom from Self-Imprisonment

## Using the Key of Willingness

by Kristen E.

*Freedom.* I have been searching for this elusive state for as long as I can remember. I searched for it before I knew what it meant to be enslaved – and I wanted it long before I knew what it was.

When I was a teenager, I believed it was my mother who enslaved me. After my father's death, she was no longer someone I felt I knew. I was a ghost. No one could see me. The world was strange – an alien, menacing place in which happiness and hope had vanished. I was depressed, terrified, and deeply enraged by my own existence.

My mother thought I should "get over it."

I thought I should leave the planet. A terrible mistake had been made, I believed: I should not have been born. My mother, my sister, and everyone else I knew would be better off if I did not exist.

"Freedom" for me back then came in the form of alcohol, pot, and stolen prescription narcotics. At first there was the lift-off – the escape from my own identity. The world blurred, became fuzzier. I was a better me, a different me. But even back then, it was not this happy, fuzzy state that I



sought, but something black and empty beyond it. I drank at the age of sixteen like I was driving a car full speed toward the edge of a cliff. I wanted to die as much as, if not more than, I wanted to live. Thankfully, I lacked the courage to follow

*"we walk into our own cages, often before we understand what we're doing"*

through on my convictions, and I survived.

I continued my search for freedom for another twenty years. I sought it in bottle after bottle of wine, in boyfriend after boyfriend. In music, in jobs, in cocaine, in the stars at night. I fantasized about walking into the ocean until the waves covered my head, and never coming back. And yet the harder I tried to escape it, the narrower my life became. I lived always

with the awareness of a shadow. It followed me. It *owned* me.

I was anything but free.

On October 8, 2006, at 4AM, I took my last drink. My mother, by then a supportive friend, stayed on the phone with me as I poured every remaining ounce of alcohol in my house down my kitchen sink.

Alcoholism is a slow death. I have no illusions about that anymore. That it was trying to kill me I see with increasing clarity the longer I am

sober.

Page 66 of the Big Book states, "We began to see that the world and its people really dominated us. In that state, the wrongdoing of others, fancied or real, had the power to actually kill. How could we escape?"

We escape not by changing the world and its people, but by removing its power over us. Through recovery, we learn that our freedom cannot be given to us by this world, nor can it be taken from us by this world. We learn, sometimes quickly and sometimes slowly, to adopt a "new Employer." It is our *choice of employer* that grants us our freedom.

Once, in a state of despair, I wrote to my Higher Power. "Why won't you take this pain from me?" I said. To my surprise, an answer came. "*I cannot take from you what you will not give to me.*"

And I believe it is true: we walk into our own cages, often before we understand what we're doing. And it is we who must decide to use the key – "the key of willingness" – to open that cage and walk back out again.

Today, I feel like my life is beginning. It's not perfect—but I don't expect it to be any more. I'm not chasing down a mythical dream of future happiness; I'm living in what is *here*. What is here is infinitely precious. The fog swooping down like a living thing over the western hills. The expression in my cat's eyes when I rub his chin. The mess of this life, flowing through me and around me.

T.S. Eliot says, "Liberty is a different kind of pain from prison."

It is a pain I choose.

TP

# Western Roundup, Living Sober Conference

## Why It Matters

by Chuck L.

In the summer of 1976, while America was celebrating its Bicentennial, 198 gays and lesbians had their first clean and sober conference at San Francisco State University in the student union. The conference was started based on a "resentment" that gays and lesbian were not recognized at the 1975 International A.A. Conference. Thirty-four years later during the Fourth of July weekend the annual Western Roundup, Living Sober Conference is held in San Francisco.

At its peak in the mid-1980's, when it was held at the Bill Graham Civic Center Auditorium, it attracted over 5,000 registered participants.

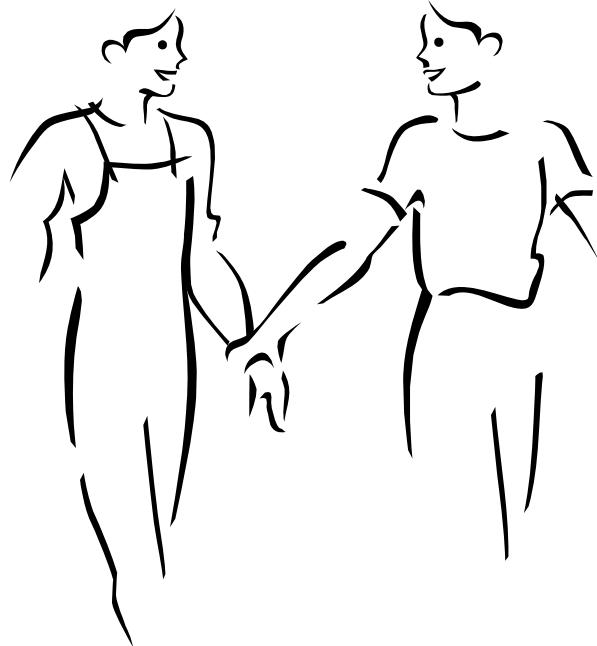
It is the oldest and longest continuously held lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) conference in the world and has inspired the founding of over 15 sober LGBT roundups in the US and Canada. The San Francisco LGBT sober community holds various fundraisers, including rummage sales, drag shows and dances, throughout the year to raise money for the event.

In addition to meetings with various topics about recovery specifically catered to LGBT people, and the dance, everyone looks forward to the A.A. musical each year. Like any kind of service, anyone can participate and talent is not a pre-requisite. Eric B. reminisces about the six months of rehearsals that "allowed me to get to know my fellow alcoholics and feel like I was part of

something. I was a lonely drunk and so this was my introduction back into 'society.'

Robbie M., better known as "DJ Robbie," describes it as "the first place I deejayed on a giant sound system in front of a sober crowd. There was no booze or drugs. I kept a happy dance floor for hours. I was being of service and people loved reclaiming dancing as sober behavior. It's life changing and life affirming for so many people."

As Robbie mentions, so much of life in the LGBT



*"Oh, good, you're still alive," we would joke.*

community in San Francisco involves Pride parades and parties consisting of drinking events, now even sponsored by mainstream beer companies. The conference is a mainstay for many to simply meet other sober LGBT people. Current Chair Alejandro D. says the camaraderie and continuity is like a family reunion for people who come from all over the country and plan their annual vacations to the Bay Area for the event. "Seeing everyone come together with infectious spirit makes the year's worth of meetings and planning worth it, to see LGBTs having fun and being silly and sober!"

Former Chairperson Florante S. got sober at a conference. "I couldn't even afford to pay for registration in 2004, my first year getting sober. I was only going to one meeting a week and needed to connect with

people. A friend told me just to sign up and I felt that the fellowship awakened me."

For this author, being HIV+ for 18 years, the connections are obvious and go deeper. Just to see my fellow HIV+ alcoholics and addicts showing up at the conference was a relief because even when people were getting sick, and may have stopped going to meetings on a regular basis, they would try to get it together to come to the conference. "Oh, good, you're still alive," we would joke as we laughed and hugged each other. In the 1980's, when AIDS was such a terrible death sentence, it was all we could do!

This year's Western Roundup, Living Sober Conference takes place Friday, July 2 through Sunday, July 4 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in San Francisco. For more information or advance registration check out the website at [TP](#)

# the twelve traditions

## Tradition 7

by Charley D.

"The pressure of that fat treasury would surely tempt the board to invent all kinds of schemes to do good with such funds, and so divert A.A. from its primary purpose." *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, pp. 164-5.

So wrote our founder of the time in the fellowship's early days when the A.A. Foundation decided to decline large bequests its trustees learned were on the way. A.A. asserted and continues to assert its financial independence by declining to become wealthy. This was A.A.'s famous vow to adopt an existence of "corporate poverty." Like many A.A. concepts, this one seems a paradox. Isn't this like saying you're going to stave off starvation by not eating? No. Starvation is not the objective. According to Tradition Seven, every A.A. group must get by on its own, with a prudent reserve for lean times, but may not stockpile wealth.

But why not stockpile wealth? All sorts of other institutions do.

Universities entreat alumni and others to add to their sometimes huge endowments. Endowment size and alumni participation in annual giving have become keenly competitive with the "best" schools boasting high numbers for each. Does that prevent these institutions from fulfilling their mission of learning and research? To the contrary, their leaders insist they must have funds to fulfill their mission.

Organized religious bodies ask, in some cases even require, members to contribute to keep churches open, perform charitable work and send missionaries to recruit more members. These organizations say money doesn't

## FREEDOM FROM WEALTH

### **Every A.A. Group Ought To Be Fully Self Supporting, Declining Outside Contributions**



distract them from their spiritual purpose. Without it, they say they couldn't exist.

Worthy charities fight disease, help unfortunates recover from natural disaster and perform good works of many other types. Most, perhaps all, solicit contributions and accumulate cash. They assert they need the funds for their work. Who can gainsay those assertions?

A.A. differs in an important way. It exists only for its members. Beyond its own members, it has no target group it seeks to help, change or influence – no student body, no community of parishioners, no outside group of victims of disaster, sickness or poverty. A.A.'s sole "outside" interest is the alcoholic still suffering who hasn't found a way out of the disease's endless misery. Even so, by declining to proselytize and choosing instead a policy of attraction, A.A. avoids the need for large expenditures on

promotional or "missionary" efforts. In short, A.A. doesn't need the money. Its members don't need cash. They need each other.

This tradition has a Darwinian side. The principle of financial independence coupled with A.A.'s vow of corporate poverty ensures that A.A. groups that work will thrive but not get rich. Those that don't work will either dwindle and perish or change and survive. This may seem harsh. But should a group that doesn't effectively carry its message to its own members survive? Surely not. "Keep coming back. It works." Many A.A. meetings end with this slogan. Tradition Seven in a way stands for its flip side. "If it doesn't work, then don't come back." And that's just fine. The mark of a thriving A.A. group will never be that "fat treasury" Bill W. feared. A.A. will always measure its success, one day, one drunk at a time, in the sobriety and spiritual growth of its members.



# A NEW FREEDOM AND A NEW HAPPINESS

## ***Hospital and Institution Committee Provides Both***

by Lisa C.

My last drink was on July 4, 2004, Independence Day. I never realized that I hadn't been free until I came to Alcoholics Anonymous. I was then able to see that when I drank, I lost all control – I lost my freedom and became a puppet to alcohol, which was pulling my strings.

In A.A., I learned I could live a life without alcohol. I had a new freedom – from alcohol – but I wasn't happy. I have found that I must keep taking steps in my recovery to continue growing. It wasn't until I went through a very painful time in my life that I gave myself fully to this program, by being of service beyond the meeting level. I upped my meetings and met more people, one of whom asked me if I would speak at a meeting at San Francisco General Hospital psych ward. I was anxious about speaking there because I didn't know what to expect. Nevertheless, I said yes because that is what I was taught to do in A.A.

I showed up at the psych ward with two other A.A.s, the secretary and my co-speaker. We had to be let into this locked facility. At the end of the meeting, the three of us would be leaving, but the patients who were there would not have that freedom. We picked up the coffee, cookies, and

literature and went up to where the meeting was held. The coffee and cookies were a major draw to the patients. They started coming in, and I was nervous. Bob, the secretary, was friendly with them and introduced me to several. A few patients were very out of it and pretty much incoherent. Some just came for the free coffee and cookies and left, but some stayed for the meeting.

When it was my turn to speak, I shared my experience, strength, and hope, and focused on the solution. I also shared how out of control I had been, hoping that some of them could relate to that. While I was sharing, one guy kept interrupting to ask me questions; the hospital workers told him to be quiet or he'd have to leave (which happened at one point), but I was glad he was interested enough in my story to ask me questions.

When we turned the meeting over for discussion, not many wanted to share. There was one guy who shared, and he really seemed to get it and was really into A.A. He said we made his night by being there. When we left, I thought, if nothing else, at least we reached one guy. I

felt so good after the meeting, like I had really been of service. It also made me grateful that I was free to walk through those locked doors.

Bob asked me if I wanted to bring a meeting there once a month. After the positive experience, I definitely wanted to. Now, every time I leave that meeting, I feel happy – happy to have been of service. It was only when I truly gave myself to A.A. through more service, including a monthly H&I commitment, that I can genuinely say I have a new freedom and a new happiness.

tP



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# Musings on Marin Meeting Rituals

## One Woman's Take

by Marin Meeting Maven

Well, let's see. The 7AM/7 days a week A.A. meeting in Fairfax recites the Third Step prayer as a group in the beginning and then the Seventh Step prayer closer to the end. Of course they have copies of these prayers on the literature table, but it feels like just too much prayer – a bit cultish or "in crowd." Yet, the posi-

tive side is that it's kind of nice to memorize these prayers (so as not to feel like an idiot) as coping tools in times of need. Also, either the serenity prayer or the Lord's Prayer are recited holding hands at the end per usual. Personally, I think the Lord's Prayer should be abolished altogether.

Then there is a Saturday evening meeting in San Geronimo or Forest Knolls at which they announce that cross talk is allowed. When it's warm, people sit outside on the deck of the church. I really liked the meet-

ing because they helped a man get over a lot of his shame for having relapsed and returned to the group. It's a small meeting, about a dozen folks, and I believe the size helps the cross talk work.

There's also a 6PM Saturday Fairfax "Meditation" meeting where we meditate five minutes at the start and five minutes at the end (to relaxing music). The overhead lights are kept turned off during the shares as well (but there are little Christmas lights to see one's way to the bathroom or wherever).

tP

## One Spouse Quits; the Other Can't

### Interview with Longtimer: Martha S.

as told to the Drunk Whisperer

DW: What's your sobriety date?

MS: September 7, 1964, Labor Day. Although I did not know it was to be my last drink. I knew my husband was an alcoholic, bless his heart, and I had read Marty Mann's book [*New Primer on Alcoholism*, 1958]. He was drinking before I met him, so I don't take responsibility for his alcoholism. I was 18 when we were married and Bud was 27. Nice, nice, nice guy; he was one of these functioning drunks. And I was going down the tubes; I was going from happy-go-lucky drunk to depression and then to anger. I was so mad about something. I got overweight and sloppy. During the 1940s, we had three kids. And then it was in the 1950s when my depression started showing up; he went on the school board and I started watching

myself when I was out in public with him. For his sake, I quit telling dirty stories in public that so embarrassed him; he was conservative at heart. So I was using his tranquilizers and I was using my diet pills. And then of course I was sipping booze right out of the bottle – quick slugs – to calm my nerves. And I was getting to the

*"I began to read the Big Book that someone had given me, and I thought it was very corny."*

point where I couldn't remember which pill I had taken and what was the interval. I was just coping.

DW: Weren't diet pills called "mother's little helper"?

MS: I know that when I finally quit drinking, my daughter said, "Mom, since you don't take your pills, you

don't stick your tongue out anymore." She said I used to go around like this [rolls tongue and opens mouth]. My point is, Bud was my higher power and I did love him dearly, but I was fed up with him and the money problems, you know, because he handled all the finances. He wanted to move. He sold the store. I didn't

want to move. I wanted to please him but I didn't want to leave my dream house. And I remember standing at the kitchen window thinking, I'm trying to make the perfect decision, and there was something like a voice that said, "Nobody can make the perfect decision." And I said, "Well, then, you're going to have to help me." Looking back, that was when I surrendered.

(Continued on page 11)

# The Bedevilements and the Promises

*Thanks to Bill S. and Penny P. for this reminder about the bedevilments (page 52) and their replacement as a result of working the steps by the Ninth Step promises (pages 83 and 84) of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous.*

## We were having trouble with personal relationships.

We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away.

## We couldn't control our emotional natures.

(Continued from page 10)

DW: So you quit drinking then?

MS: Not quite. Labor Day, September 7, 1964, my mom was coming over for lunch and I was one of these women who did not care for her mother. So I chug-a-lugged two beers in the morning because there wasn't time to take a pill. As it turned out, those were my last drinks. Later that week, I began to read the Big Book that someone had given me, and I thought it was very corny. But then I got to Chapter Five and I read the steps. See, I was trying to help my husband. I was reading the Big Book for his sake. And I thought, I could try to quit smoking using these steps, and then if Bud tried to quit drinking, I'd have a parallel experience. By late afternoon, I realized I hadn't had a cigarette. It was just sort of weird. I'd been a smoker for years. I'd tried to quit. But not being a religious person, I had no idea what had happened. And I was still trying to get help for my husband, so I called the Pasadena National Council on Alcoholism and

We will comprehend the word serenity, and we will know peace.

## We were a prey to misery and depression.

Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.

## We couldn't make a living.

We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.

## We had a feeling of uselessness.

That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.

## We were full of fear.

Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us.

## We were unhappy.

We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.

## We couldn't seem to be of real help to other people.

No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

TP

the woman invited me to come for an appointment. I was overweight and my clothes were spotted and my hair was dirty and I kind of had the shakes, and I sat there talking about my husband's problem. [laughter]

DW: How'd you decide you were an alcoholic?

MS: She recommended a book, *Just One More*, by a man named James Free, and it said, no social drinker ever has blackouts. I thought, my god, is that what's wrong with me? Because I was a blackout drunk.

DW: When did you go to your first meeting?

MS: A friend of a friend I used to drink with took me to my first A.A. meeting about a month or six weeks after my last drink, and I sat there and cried, couldn't stop crying.

JK: What about Bud? Is he sober today?

MS: No. He killed himself in 1970. He couldn't quit. When he didn't drink, he'd have the pills. And he had

access to umpteen doctors because, again, he's handling all the money, he's paying all the bills, he's carrying the briefcase around. He went to meetings, sure, he went to lots of meetings. But he couldn't stay quit. [After Martha got sober in 1964, her husband, Bud, attempted suicide at least twice before he succeeded with a gun in 1970. She came home and found him late at night.] I could see on the door, flesh and blood. And in the dark of Bud's room, I could see his form, just a form on the bed. So I said, thank you, God, it's over. And that was my reaction, because I had been living in suspense, waiting for him to kill somebody in an accident. Waiting for him to kill me. Waiting for him to kill someone drunk driving.

DW: So it was a relief.

MS: Oh, an absolute relief. Absolute. Because he hadn't killed anybody else.

(To be continued next month.)



Last month, we launched this column to share with our readers the information requests we get at Central Office. The focus of our column this month is on meeting designations.

**Dear Help,**

I cannot figure out which group I should sign up for. Are some classes not A.A., or are they all the same thing? What does "closed" mean? I need some direction. I have a problem with alcohol. A family member just went into the hospital for drinking problems, and I need to find a support group to help me stop drinking right away.

Thanks a lot,

**Female seeker**

Dear FS,

Congratulations on taking action on your drinking problem. The short answer is that you can attend any A.A. meeting in our meeting schedule (except men's meetings). A.A. is not a class. Each meeting is organized by its members. Just show up at the location on the schedule and take a seat. There is an opportunity during the meeting to identify yourself as a "newcomer," but you don't have to — the reason to do so is so that people can come up to you after the meeting and welcome you. I recommend that you raise your hand as a newcomer.

All A.A. meetings not designated as "closed" are "open," which means

that people who do not identify themselves as having a problem with alcohol can attend; for example, a friend can go with an alcoholic or a student who wants to observe a meeting can attend. However, "closed" meetings mean that only people with a desire to stop drinking should attend; you would qualify.

In sobriety,

E-volunteer

\*\*\*\*\*

**Dear Help,**

I was thinking about attending a meeting but I have several questions:

**What is a "Big Book Meeting"?**

**Which type of meeting is best for the first time person attending? It seems that a lot of the statements of A.A. are religious, but I don't want to include religion — are there any meetings that avoid speaking of God or a Higher Power and instead focus on the community?**

**Are there meetings for people in the 20s age group exclusively?**

**I really appreciate your time and consideration.**

**Newby**

Dear Newby,

These are all good questions.

A speaker meeting is one where a

speaker shares his or her experience, strength and hope for about 20 minutes. Almost all meetings that are not speaker meetings are book study meetings. Big Book study means that the group reads and discusses the book called *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

If a meeting does not have a "closed," "men's" or "women's" designation, then it is open to anyone. For example, in order to attend the "African American beginners" meeting, you do not need to be an African American or a beginner. Some meetings are designated "YP" which means young people. Those meetings will tend to have younger people attending but, again, there are no strict rules except the ones I described above.

*The meetings are not religious!*

That is a rumor, most likely perpetuated by people who have never attended. There is no requirement that you believe anything. And where God is mentioned in the steps, it is qualified by "as we understood him." I was comforted by that qualification at my first meeting. I believed there was no God, so that is how I understood God, and that was fine. Also, I am Jewish, but I have never found there to be a conflict between A.A. and my religion. However, there are a few meetings named with the terms "atheists," "agnostics" and "freethinkers" where you may feel at home.

# Meet THE MEETING

by Bree L.

The splendor of the Presidio provides a delightful location for this meeting. The Veteran's Academy is just next door to the George Lucas Digital Complex and there is ample parking. The tricky part is getting there, but it is well worth the challenge. The format for the meeting is to cover one step every month starting with Step One in January. The first three Wednesdays, the step of that month is read from the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. The reading is followed by a speaker who shares about the step, and then a discussion. The fourth week is speaker/discussion without a focus on any step. Larry V., the current speaker-getter, says that he is continually on alert for the best speakers. He attends many meetings with this purpose in mind.

*Serenity in the Park* has gone through a bit of a transition, as it has been around for a while but under the title of *Vets and Yets*. Sam B. said that those who regularly attended were not happy with the name, as the meeting was not just for veterans. They wanted to include non-veterans

## Serenity in the Park

as well as veterans and put in a mention of their Park/ Presidio location. Even though the meeting is held at the Veterans Academy, all are welcome. Those who regularly attend often like to bring in outside members to share their unique environment.

"I wake up to the calls of wild parrots," says Larry V., who lives in the Presidio. "There have also been reports of opossums, quail and even coyotes." Nowadays with Daylight Savings Time it's easy to ride a bike or motorcycle to the meeting, or even take a hike beforehand. Crissy Field is a short three-block walk away. Starbucks is two blocks away at the Digital Center. There are also two restaurants within the Presidio as well as numerous restaurants along Lombard Street or in the Marina where a person can have dinner before the seven o'clock meeting.

Getting there can be challenging: there seem to be many squirrel paths within the Presidio and some map providers don't know Girard Avenue. Lincoln Blvd is also not the same Lincoln Blvd. that runs along Golden Gate Park. Sam B., known for his

excellent directions, offers three ways to get to the meeting: The Lombard Gate, Presidio Blvd. and Arguello Ave.

Lombard Gate: come through the gate and take the first right which is Letterman Dr.; that becomes Lincoln Blvd. Take Lincoln to the third block, which is Halleck. (The second street is Girard; go past Girard.) Take a right on Halleck, and go to the third *One Way* sign and park between the buildings. Walk across the small bridge and you're at the Veteran's Academy. The Security person at the door will buzz you in and offer easy directions to the meeting room.

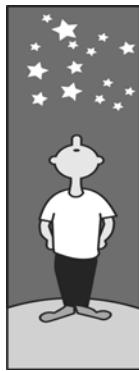
Presidio Blvd.: Presidio runs into Lincoln. Follow the directions from Lincoln and the Lombard Gate.

Arguello: This can be problematic. Sam B. encourages first-timers to come in the other two ways.

As with most things, the first test-drive is the hardest.

*Serenity in the Park* is held at 1030 Girard Road/ Gorgas Ave. Veterans Academy building in the Presidio on Wednesdays at 7:00 PM.

tP



## Leo (July 23 - Aug 22)

Drinking style: Leo likes to drink and dance -- they're often fabulous dancers, and usually pretty good drinkers as well, losing their commanding dignity and turning kittenish. Of course, they're quite aware they're darling - Leos will be Leos, after all. They generally know their limit, probably because they loathe losing self-control. When they get over-refreshed, expect

flirting to ensue -- and perhaps not with the one who brought them. But Leo's not the type to break rules even when drunk, so just try to ignore it (try harder, Cancer) and expect a sheepish (and hung over) Lion to make it up to you the next day.

# IFB meeting summary – June 2010

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

A is for Alcoholic	Come 'N Get It	High Noon (Thursday)	On Awakening	Sunset 9'ers (Sat.)	Valencia Smokefree
Any Lengths	Common Welfare	High Noon (Tuesday)	One Liners	Sunset 9'ers (Sun.)	Walk of Shame
Artist and Writers	Doing the Deal	High Sobriety	Parent Trap 2	Sunset Speaker Step	We Care
Back to Basics	Each Day a New Beg. (M-F)	Huntington Square	Saturday Easy Does It	Ten Years After	Women Who Drank...
Beginner's Meeting	Each Day a New Beg. (Sun)	Let It Be Now	Sesame Step	They Don't Know Who We Are	Women's Promises
Bernal New Day	Early Start	Living Sober With HIV	SFPOA	Tiburon Haven Group	
Blue Book Special	Embarcadero Group	Lush Lounge	Sober 5150's	Tiburon Men's Stag	
Came to Park	Fireside Chat	Marina Discussion	Some Are Sicker Than Others	Too Early	
Castro Discussion	Friday All Groups	Men's Gentle Touch	Steppin' Up	Tuesday Chip	
Code Blue	Haight Street Explorers	Noon Smokeless	Sunday Night Castro SD	Tuesday Newcomers	

This is an unofficial summary of the June 2010 IFB meeting, which followed the 2010 Annual Meeting. The summary is provided for convenience; it is not intended to be the completed approved minutes. For a complete copy of the minutes and full committee reports see "IFB" on 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 Wednesday June 2, 2010 at the First Unitarian Universalist Church, 1187 Franklin Street, San Francisco. Next month's meeting will be Wednesday July 7, 2010 at the same location.

This month's meeting consisted of two separate meetings. The IFB Annual Meeting was conducted from 7:00 to 8:00 PM. The monthly meeting was conducted from 8:00 to 9:00 PM.

**Chair Report:** No report.

**Treasurer Report:** Dashiell T. reported

that group contributions flattened in April. Individual contribution did well compared to what was expected. The balance sheet is healthy; we have 2 ½ months of cash on hand. Paid for server replacement. A little under budget this month - net loss of about \$1K – employee expenses were higher than budgeted, because of deferred contribution issue. Prudent reserve has been reset based on 6 months of current expenses, increasing it by about \$4,500 to \$121,000.

**Central Office Manager Report:** Maury reported that there are service opportunities at the International Convention. Has a copy of all conference actions and advisory actions from the last GS conference. If interested in any of the officer positions on the IFB you can see previous months minutes with descriptions on our website or reach out to the Central Office. There were lots of new IFB members in the past year: 54 total.

**Central Office Committee Report:** No report.

**Roll Call and Polling for COC availability:** Steve took roll and polled for Central Office Committee availability.

#### IFB Liaison Reports:

**SF H&I:** Scott referred to a letter to groups from H&I regarding the pink can (provided during the meeting). Pink cans should be passed after the 7th tradition. H&I needs support but doesn't want to take money away from other service

entities.

**Living Sober Conference:** Alejandro thanked the IFB for opportunity to be of service for the last 3 years. Living sober is the oldest AA LGBT conference with Al-Anon participation in the world. Held every 4th of July. Program has been finalized. Upcoming event: Pink Bingo.

**SF Teleservice:** Steve R. reported that Teleservice currently has 8 openings.

#### Old Business:

#### Proposed Revised ASL Translation Policy:

Virginia made a motion to accept the AA Interpreter Request Policy (Revised 6/2/2010). No discussion but policy was distributed. Vote taken. Motion passed.

Minority opinion was heard. Motion was put to revote after at least 1 member reported they would change their vote based on the minority opinion. Revote taken. Motion 15 in favor. 23 opposed. Motion does not pass. IFB was asked to allow time to hear from a deaf member who discussed the lack of meetings that provide ASL interpretation.

#### New Business:

#### Upcoming Officers of the Board

**Vacancies:** Will be electing an IFB Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary next month. Descriptions of the positions were given. Reps were asked to please consider making themselves available for them.

(Continued on page 15)

# Individual Contributions

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

## ONGOING MEMORIALS

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

## ANNIVERSARIES

**High Noon:** Tess K.—17 years,  
Marya T.—16 years, Paul F.—5 years

**Pt. Angeles, WA:** Nancy R.—29 years

**Big Book Basics:** Lynn H.—40 years

**Guerneville, CA:** Barb E.—29 years

**Rise N Shine:** Carl M.—7 years

**Mission Fellowship, 6pm:** Dennis C.—14 years

### Announcements:

Elizabeth B., alternate for the Sober 5150s, reported that the Access committee in Sonoma is having a workshop on how alcoholics with mental disorders can and do recover. Also encouraged participation in upcoming Founder's Day celebration.

**Adjourn with the Responsibility Statement** Michael S. adjourned the meeting at 9:05 PM with the responsibility statement.

**STANDING REQUEST:** Let your groups know about IFB membership opportunities- great service - 1 year sobriety recommended. The IFB orientation precedes the monthly IFB meeting - 6 PM the first Wednesday of each month. If you don't want to be a representative – consider participating in a committee – members are always needed.



# SPEAKERS WANTED!!

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

**San Francisco PI/ CPC**  
(Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community)

## SPEAKER WORKSHOP 7PM

(Speaker requirement: two years of continuous sobriety in AA)

**Wednesday, July 21st, 2010**  
**at Central Office**

For further information, call Central Office: 415-674-1821

## COMMITTEE CONTACTS

The following is a list of names and email addresses for IFB Officers and for most of the IFB committee. 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**

Dave A. 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**

David S. website@aasf.org

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

Glen R. picpc@aasf.org

#### **SF TELESERVICE COMMITTEE**

Seth H. sfteleservice@aasf.org

# aa group contributions

Fellowship Contributions	Apr. 10	YTD	Marin Contributions	Apr. 10	YTD	San Francisco Contributions	Apr. 10	YTD
Anonymous		\$ 500	Noon Hope F 12pm		\$ 189	Afro American F 8pm		\$ 35
Brisbane Breakfast Bunch	\$ 40	\$ 98	Novato Monday Stag M 8pm		\$ 300	After Work M 6PM	\$ 60	\$ 60
Contribution Box		\$ 319	On Awakening 7D 530am		\$ 525	Alumni W 830pm		\$ 206
Deer Park Discovery Group	\$ 15	\$ 15	Pathfinders Tu 12pm		\$ 200	As Bill Sees It Tu 1210pm		\$ 73
From the Start to the Finish	\$ 120	\$ 120	Primary Purpose W 830pm		\$ 140	Be Still AA Su 12pm	\$ 63	\$ 185
Gay Newcomers Group	\$ 20	\$ 20	Refugee Th 12pm	\$ 60	\$ 220	Beginner Big Book Step Th 630pm		\$ 77
IFB	\$ 133	\$ 493	Reveille 5D 7am	\$ 300	\$ 700	Beginners 12 x 12 F 7pm		\$ 360
MCYPAA		\$ 250	Rise N Shine Sun 10am		\$ 447	Beginners Mtg (Old Sutter St) Sat 6pm	\$ 275	\$ 706
Pax West M 12pm	\$ 243	\$ 243	San Geronimo Valley M 8pm		\$ 38	Beginners' Step Study Sat 630pm		\$ 434
San Francisco Young People in A.A.		\$ 800	Saturday Women's Speaker Sa 6pm		\$ 240	Beginner's Warmup W 6pm	\$ 45	\$ 45
Serenity House	\$ 150	\$ 450	Serendipity Sa 11am	\$ 163	\$ 163	Bernal New Day 7D	\$ 430	\$ 909
Sunset Group (Napa)	\$ 18	\$ 18	Six O'Clock Sunset Th 6pm	\$ 81	\$ 278	Big Book Basics F 8pm	\$ 170	\$ 298
<b>Fellowship Total</b>	<b>\$ 739</b>	<b>\$ 3,325</b>	Sober & Serene F 7pm		\$ 531	Big Book Study Su 1130am		\$ 135
<b>Marin Contributions</b>	<b>Apr. 10</b>	<b>YTD</b>	Spiritual Testost. Sun Men's Stag Su 830a		\$ 175	Blue Book Special Su 11am		\$ 217
12 & 12 Study Sa 815am		\$ 226	Steps To The Solution W 715pm	\$ 109	\$ 211	Buena Vista Breakfast Su 12pm		\$ 129
A Vision for You (Fairfax) Su 730pm		\$ 63	Stinson Beach Fellowship Th 8pm		\$ 100	Came To Believe Su 830am		\$ 105
Altitude Adjustment 7D 7am		\$ 1,395	Streetfighters Sa 9am	\$ 43	\$ 43	Castro Monday Big Book M 830pm		\$ 115
Awakenings Sa 830am		\$ 33	Sunday Express Sun 6pm		\$ 200	Chips Ahoy Tu 12pm		\$ 106
Awareness/Acceptance M 1030am		\$ 155	Sunday Friendship Sun 7pm		\$ 200	Cocoanuts Su 9am		\$ 23
Be Still AA Su 12pm		\$ 46	Sunday Night Corte Madera Sun 8pm		\$ 200	Code Blue Big Book Study W 7pm	\$ 24	\$ 110
Beginners & Closed Tu 7pm & 830pm		\$ 410	Sunlight of the Spirit Th 7pm		\$ 100	Common Welfare Th 8pm		\$ 151
Blackie's Pasture Sa 830pm	\$ 135	\$ 135	Terra Linda Group Th 830pm		\$ 250	Cow Hollow Men's Group W 8pm	\$ 262	\$ 481
Caledonia Sun 8pm		\$ 250	The Fearless Searchers F 8pm		\$ 38	Dark Secrets F 10pm		\$ 71
Closed Women Step Study Tu 330pm	\$ 148	\$ 324	There is a Solution Tu 6pm		\$ 166	Design for Living Sat 8am	\$ 23	\$ 401
Cover to Cover W 800pm		\$ 197	Thursday Night Book Club Th 7pm	\$ 75	\$ 75	Doin' the Deal Sun 10pm		\$ 86
Creekside New Growth Sun 7pm		\$ 186	Thursday Night Speaker Th 830pm	\$ 463	\$ 2,052	Each Day a New Beginning F 7am		\$ 927
Crossroads Sun 12pm		\$ 749	Tiburon Haven Sun 12pm	\$ 258	\$ 258	Each Day a New Beginning M 7am	\$ 300	\$ 300
Day At A Time 7D 630am	\$ 432	\$ 432	Tiburon Women's Candlelight W 8pm		\$ 148	Each Day a New Beginning Th 7am		\$ 553
Downtown Mill Valley F 830pm	\$ 343	\$ 343	Tuesday Twelve Step Tu 630pm		\$ 20	Each Day a New Beginning Tu 7am	\$ 243	\$ 522
Four Horsemen Thu 7pm		\$ 25	We, Us and Ours M 650pm		\$ 200	Each Day a New Beginning W 7am		\$ 299
Freedom Finders F 830pm	\$ 321	\$ 321	Wednesday Night Candlelight W 8pm		\$ 296	Early Start F 6pm		\$ 1,205
Friday Night Book F 830pm	\$ 179	\$ 179	What's It All About F 12pm		\$ 200	Embarcadero Group 5D 1210pm		\$ 459
Friday Night Gay Men's Stag F 830pm	\$ 96	\$ 96	Women on Monday M 7pm		\$ 85	Eureka Valley Topic M 6pm		\$ 577
Girls Night Out W 815pm		\$ 75	Women's Big Book Tu 1030am		\$ 250	Excelsior "Scent" Free for All Sa 8pm	\$ 60	\$ 120
Gratitude Tu 8pm		\$ 424	Women's Meeting Su 430pm		\$ 56	Extreme Makeover M 730pm	\$ 94	\$ 94
Greenfield Newcomers Sun 7pm		\$ 569	Women's Step Study Group M 12pm	\$ 200	\$ 200	Federal Speaker Su 12pm		\$ 244
Happy Destiny F 7pm		\$ 83	Working Dogs W 1205pm		\$ 406	Fell Street F 830pm		\$ 30
Happy, Joyous & Free 5D 12pm		\$ 1,250	<b>Marin Total</b>		<b>\$ 5,427 \$22,138</b>	Firefighters & Friends Tu 10am		\$ 446
High & Dry W 12pm	\$ 182	\$ 285	<b>San Francisco Contributions</b>	<b>Apr. 10</b>	<b>YTD</b>	Fireside Chat Group Tu 8pm		\$ 176
Intimate Feelings Sa 10am	\$ 223	\$ 223	10am Step Study M 10am		\$ 60	Friday All Groups F 830pm		\$ 269
Inverness Sunday Serenity Su 10am	\$ 140	\$ 140	6am Dry Dock 7D		\$ 53	Friday Lunchtime Step F 12pm		\$ 111
Island Group Th 8pm		\$ 167	6am Dry Dock W	\$ 78	\$ 250	Friday Smokeless F 830pm		\$ 195
Marin City Groups 5D 630pm	\$ 65	\$ 188	7am As Bill Sees It Fri	\$ 23	\$ 86	Friendly Circle Beginners Su 715pm		\$ 224
Marin Young People F 830pm		\$ 30	7am Living Sober W 7am		\$ 71	Full Flight From Reality Sa 1230pm		\$ 129
Mill Valley 7D 7am	\$ 613	\$ 1,363	7am Speaker Discussion Th 7am		\$ 100	Happy Destiny Sa 630pm		\$ 38
Mill Valley Discussion W 830pm		\$ 219	830am Smokeless F 830am		\$ 208	Happy Hour Ladies Night F 530pm		\$ 28
Monday Blues M 630pm	\$ 432	\$ 432	A is for Alcohol Tu 6pm	\$ 23	\$ 23	High Noon Friday 1215pm	\$ 37	\$ 448
Monday Night Women's M 8pm	\$ 166	\$ 331	A New Start F 830pm		\$ 680	High Noon Thursday 1215pm		\$ 205
Monday Nooners M 12pm		\$ 389	A Vision for You (SF) Su 630pm		\$ 100	High Noon Tuesday 1215pm		\$ 628
Morning Attitude Adjustment	\$ 100	\$ 100	AA Step Study Su 6pm		\$ 57	High Noon Wednesday 1215pm		\$ 210
Nativity Monday Night Big Book M 8pm		\$ 100	Acceptance Group M 530pm		\$ 71	Hilldwellers M 8pm		\$ 137
Newcomers Step M 730pm		\$ 307	Afro American Beginners Sat 8pm		\$ 41	How Was Your Week? Sa 10am		\$ 56
						Huntington Square W 630pm	\$ 167	\$ 334

San Francisco Contributions	Apr. 10	YTD	San Francisco Contributions	Apr. 10	YTD	San Francisco Contributions	Apr. 10	YTD
Joys of Recovery Tu 8pm	\$ 29		Relapse,Rebound,Retreads & Winners	\$ 84		Sunset 9'ers Tu	\$ 2	
Just Alkies F 7pm	\$ 75		Richmond Step Study M 730pm	\$ 86	\$ 86	Sunset 9'ers W	\$ 188	
Keep Coming Back Sa 11am	\$ 332		Rigorous Honesty Th 1205pm	\$ 35		Sunset Speaker Step Sun 730pm	\$ 219	
Light Brigade Discussion Su 7pm	\$ 120		Room to Grow F 8pm	\$ 123	\$ 258	Surf Tu 8pm	\$ 127	\$ 127
Like A Prayer Su 4pm	\$ 100		Rule 62 W 10pm	\$ 85		Ten Years After Su 6pm	\$ 120	\$ 961
Lincoln Park Sat 830pm	\$ 92		Saturday Night Regroup Sat 730pm	\$ 398		The 12 Schleppers Th 8pm	\$ 80	
Live and Let Live Su 8pm	\$ 574		Say Hey Group M, Tu, F 6pm	\$ 160		The Lads Fr 730pm	\$ 100	\$ 100
Living Sober W 8pm	\$ 306		Second Chance Th 215pm	\$ 28	\$ 28	The Parent Trap M 1230pm	\$ 153	
Living Sober with HIV W 6pm	\$ 84	\$ 84	Serenity House	\$ 150		They Stopped In Time M 8pm	\$ 47	
Luke's Group W 7pm	\$ 60	\$ 60	Serenity in the Park W 7pm	\$ 30		Thursday Morning Men's BB Study	\$ 575	
Luke's Group W 8pm	\$ 70		Serenity Seekers M 730pm	\$ 226		Too Early Sat 8am	\$ 167	\$ 917
Lush Lounge Sa 2pm	\$ 205	\$ 205	Sesame Step Tu 730pm	\$ 108		Tuesday Big Book Study Tu 6pm	\$ 60	
Meeting Place Noon F 12pm	\$ 174		Shamrocks & Serenity M 730pm	\$ 200	\$ 586	Tuesday Downtown Tu 8pm	\$ 64	\$ 64
Meeting Place Noon W 12pm	\$ 100		Sinbar Su 830pm	\$ 194		Tuesday Night Step Tu 7pm	\$ 22	
Mid-Morning Support Su 1030am	\$ 281	\$ 508	Sober Across the Board M-Sa 830am	\$ 133		Valencia Smokefree F 6pm	\$ 73	
Midnight Meditation Sat 12am	\$ 24		Sober at State MW 1210pm	\$ 15	\$ 15	Walk of Shame W 8pm	\$ 159	
Miracle (Way) Off 24th St W 730pm	\$ 96		Sometimes Slowly Sa 11am	\$ 334		Waterfront Sun 8pm	\$ 431	
Mission Terrace W 8pm	\$ 60		Sp. Founded Prog. Of Action (SFPOA)	\$ 425		We Care Tu 12pm	\$ 146	\$ 256
Monday Beginners M 8pm	\$ 100	\$ 280	Step Talk Su 830am	\$ 169	\$ 588	Wednesday Morning Men's Meeting	\$ 146	
Monday Men's Meeting M 8pm	\$ 375		Steppin' Up Tu 630pm	\$ 214		West Portal W 8pm	\$ 115	\$ 115
Monday Monday M 1215pm	\$ 80		Stepping Out Sat 6pm	\$ 34		Wharfrats Th 815pm	\$ 62	\$ 88
New Life W 7pm	\$ 60	\$ 195	Stonestown M 8pm	\$ 100		What It's Like Now M 6pm	\$ 92	
Newcomers Tu 8pm	\$ 168		Sunday Bookworms Sun 730pm	\$ 120		Women Living Sober Sa 10am	\$ 120	
No Reservation M 12pm	\$ 696		Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag	\$ 535		Women Who Drank Too Much	\$ 8	
Noon Smokeless F 12pm	\$ 14	\$ 128	Sunday Night 3rd Step Group 5pm	\$ 384		Women's 10 Years Plus Th 615pm	\$ 107	
Noon Smokeless W 12pm	\$ 255		Sunday Night Castro Speaker Disc Su			Women's Kitchen Table Group	\$ 359	
Off Broadway Book Th 730pm	\$ 36		8pm	\$ 73	\$ 431	Women's Mtg There is a Solution	\$ 411	\$ 411
One, Two, Three, Go! W 1pm	\$ 10		Sunday Silence Su 730pm	\$ 50		Women's Promises F 7pm	\$ 492	
Parkside Th 830pm	\$ 189	\$ 255	Sunrise Sunset Women's Step Th 6pm	\$ 236		Work In Progress Sat 7pm	\$ 613	
Pax West Th 12pm	\$ 175	\$ 443	Sunset 11'ers F	\$ 25		YAHOO Step Sa 1130am	\$ 140	
Potrero Hill 12 x 12 M 630pm	\$ 67		Sunset 11'ers Sa	\$ 57		<b>San Francisco Total</b>	<b>\$ 5,607</b>	<b>\$36,188</b>
Queers, Crackpots & Fallen Women	\$ 180		Sunset 11'ers W	\$ 84		<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>\$11,773</b>	<b>\$61,652</b>
Rebound W 830pm	\$ 60	\$ 60	Sunset 9'ers M	\$ 42				
			Sunset 9'ers Su	\$ 312				

## A Ritual of Complete Surrender

There's a guy who lives in San Mateo County with twenty+ years of sobriety. After he shares at a meeting, he regularly concludes by singing a rendition of "All of Me"! His boldness often offends people, and I find it amusing when these "open minded

members of A.A." can't see past the apparent silliness in the song – and listen to the meaning of the lyrics. Oh, lest I forget, he also encourages those in attendance to "sing along with Dave."

Ray M.



# *profit and loss statement: May 2010*

	Apr 10	Budget	Jan-Apr 10	Budget		Apr 10	Budget	Jan-Apr 10	Budget
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>					<b>Computer Consulting</b>	0	562	225	562
<b>Income</b>					<b>Total Professional Fees</b>	\$0	\$562	\$225	\$562
<b>Contributions from Groups</b>					<b>Bank Charges</b>	0		2	
Group Contributions	11686	11901	61283	50840	<b>Postage</b>				
Honors	37		319		<b>Non-Bulk Postage</b>	44		188	63
<b>Total Contributions from Groups</b>	<b>\$11,723</b>	<b>\$11,901</b>	<b>\$61,602</b>	<b>\$50,840</b>	<b>Bulk Mail</b>	0		200	246
<b>Contributions from Individuals</b>					<b>Total Postage</b>	\$44		\$388	\$309
Individual - Unrestricted	2145	251	6818	2694	<b>Rent - Office</b>	4493	4493	17973	17972
Faithful Fiver	1540	887	4616	3164	<b>Rent - Other</b>	0		225	225
Honorary Contributions	139	104	2594	783	<b>Access Expenses</b>	0	666	990	2664
<b>Total Contributions from Individuals</b>	<b>\$3,824</b>	<b>\$1,242</b>	<b>\$14,028</b>	<b>\$6,641</b>	<b>IFB Literature</b>	25		56	
<b>Gratitude Month</b>					<b>PI/CPC</b>	5	120	36	240
Gratitude Month - Groups	32		3778		<b>Filing/Fees</b>	0		25	25
Gratitude Month - Individual	0		200		<b>Insurance</b>	0		1740	901
Gratitude Month - Other	0	99	0	2807	<b>Internet Expense</b>	173	119	379	476
<b>Total Gratitude Month</b>	<b>\$32</b>	<b>\$99</b>	<b>\$3,978</b>	<b>\$2,807</b>	<b>Office Supplies</b>	157	170	1338	680
<b>Sales - Bookstore</b>	<b>10102</b>	<b>10592</b>	<b>39802</b>	<b>35159</b>	<b>Paper Purchased</b>	510	208	1179	832
<b>Newsletter Subscript.</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>Software Purchased</b>	0		0	96
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$25,725</b>	<b>\$23,894</b>	<b>\$119,568</b>	<b>\$95,577</b>	<b>Shipping</b>	-113	21	-217	84
<b>Cost of Goods Sold</b>					<b>Equipment Lease</b>	0		1546	1546
Cost of Books Sold - Shipping	12	13	121	51	<b>Repair &amp; Maintenance</b>	254	303	957	1147
Cost of Books Sold	6649	7308	25976	24260	<b>Security System</b>	0		118	108
Credit Card Processing Fees	279	271	1136	900	<b>Payroll Expenses</b>	4	5	17	20
<b>Total COGS</b>	<b>\$6,939</b>	<b>\$7,592</b>	<b>\$27,233</b>	<b>\$25,211</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	491	256	1209	1024
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>\$18,786</b>	<b>\$16,302</b>	<b>\$92,335</b>	<b>\$70,366</b>	<b>Phone Book Listings</b>	173	84	433	336
<b>Expense</b>					<b>Training</b>	0		0	20
<b>Inventory Adjustments</b>	0		-192		<b>Bad Checks</b>	7		7	12
<b>Sunshine Club</b>	0	46	20	92	<b>Miscellaneous Expense</b>	0		0	
<b>IFB Sponsored Events</b>	475	1259	475	1259	<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$23,323</b>	<b>\$19,861</b>	<b>\$78,393</b>	<b>\$76,427</b>
<b>Reconciliation Discrepancies</b>	0		-199		<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>-\$4,537</b>	<b>-\$3,559</b>	<b>\$13,942</b>	<b>-\$6,061</b>
<b>Employee Expenses</b>					<b>Other Income/Expense</b>				
Deferred comp expense	3691		3691		<b>Other Income</b>				
Wages & Salaries	8898	9403	35429	36474	<b>Interest Income</b>	226	271	930	1,084
Employer Tax Expenses	723	863	4151	4191	<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>\$226</b>	<b>\$271</b>	<b>\$930</b>	<b>\$1,084</b>
Health Benefits	3313	1283	6391	5132	<b>Net Other Income</b>	226	271	930	1,084
<b>Total Employee Expenses</b>	<b>\$16,624</b>	<b>\$11,549</b>	<b>\$49,662</b>	<b>\$45,797</b>	<b>Net Income</b>	<b>-\$4,311</b>	<b>-\$3,288</b>	<b>\$14,872</b>	<b>-\$4,977</b>
<b>Professional Fees</b>									

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# Believing in Steps Six and Seven

## Freedom from Character Defects

by Peg L.

First, I want to say how much I dislike the term, "character defects." I do not believe that we are people who have defective characters, any more than the general population. I *do* believe we have behaviors that developed in our past because we needed them to protect ourselves. They just don't serve us any longer and, in fact, may be detrimental to our functioning as loving, caring human beings.

It took me a long time to do all Twelve Steps because I didn't trust anyone enough to find a sponsor with whom to do them. Also, since I'm a dyed-in-the-wool Al-Anon as well as an alcoholic, I couldn't understand how to do the Fourth Step as described in the Big Book, where it says begin by identifying our resentments. Well, Al-anons are such *nice* people, we don't have any resentments; consequently, I couldn't figure out how to do that step. The woman I finally found to be my sponsor (after four years of sobriety) gave me something called the *Fourth Step Guide*. It asked a great many questions, which is exactly what I needed, since if I'm asked an open-ended question my memory shuts down completely, but if I'm asked direct questions I usually know the answer.

After doing the Fourth and Fifth Steps with my sponsor, I thought I was ready for Six and Seven. Then she asked whether I had my Sixth Step list. Well, that is not something that automatically emerged from that form of Fourth Step and I was mad

that she'd asked me a question I didn't have the answer to. Finally, I stammered out that it was fear, all of it was fear. "I know, dear," she said, "but I want you to go back through your Fourth Step and pull out all the ways fear made you behave."

So that was how I got my list of "character defects," and I was jazzed. Now I could turn them over to my Higher Power and then I wouldn't have to deal with them ever again. So I did. But something

*"For the first time I truly 'got' that it was an inside job."*

was wrong. I found myself unable to make my amends list and my sponsor put me back on the Seventh Step. I was mad again! In my mind she was criticizing me and telling me I hadn't done it right. Then one day I was thinking about the struggle I'd had with the Third Step Prayer. I'd told her I thought it was presumptuous to ask my Higher Power to remove my difficulties, and she looked puzzled and said, "Well, then, you don't really believe in the Sixth and Seventh Steps, do you?"

For the first time I truly "got" that it was an inside job. I took out my list of "character defects" (which I hadn't looked at after I "gave" them to my Higher Power). Then I began on a daily basis to say the Third Step Prayer, naming my difficulties. You know what? It works.



difficulties be removed, I read from my list and named them, one by one. That's when the exponential changes began in my life. You see, I'm frequently fearful, but when I have named those specific behaviors in the morning, I am not so apt to be ambushed by them later in the day. Shortly after this, I realized that I had begun making my amends to my mother who was the first person on my list of resentments. She died some years later, and when we were going through her things, I found a letter I had written to her telling her all the things I admired about her. It was one of a few letters she had kept, and I know she treasured it as I treasured my relationship with her in the years before she died.

I made that list 24 years ago and I still carry it with me today. Sometimes when I'm having problems, I remember to pull out that poor tattered list and say the Third Step Prayer, naming my difficulties. You know what? It works.

# July 2010

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