

the Point

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

from Chapter Five of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous

2010
7
JULY

A publication of the Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous

A publication of the

Intercounty Fellowship

of Alcoholics Anonymous

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The Final Frontier

Freedom in A.A.





Liberty for the Libertine



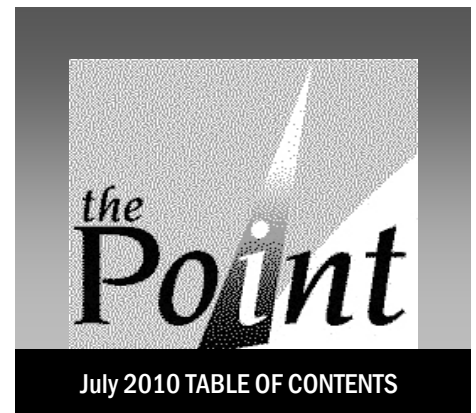
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The Point is published monthly to inform AA members about business and meeting affairs in the Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous (San Francisco and Marin Counties). The Point's pages are open to participation by all AA members. Nothing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

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> <div>     </div>			
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 SF PI/CPC Speaker Workshop 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 - 45th Avenue (near Sloat), San Francisco, CA

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

Contact Linda W. at linda_gemini@yahoo.com about payment.

Payment must be received no later than July 12th, 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

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!



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!

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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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!

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.



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 Round-Up, 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.

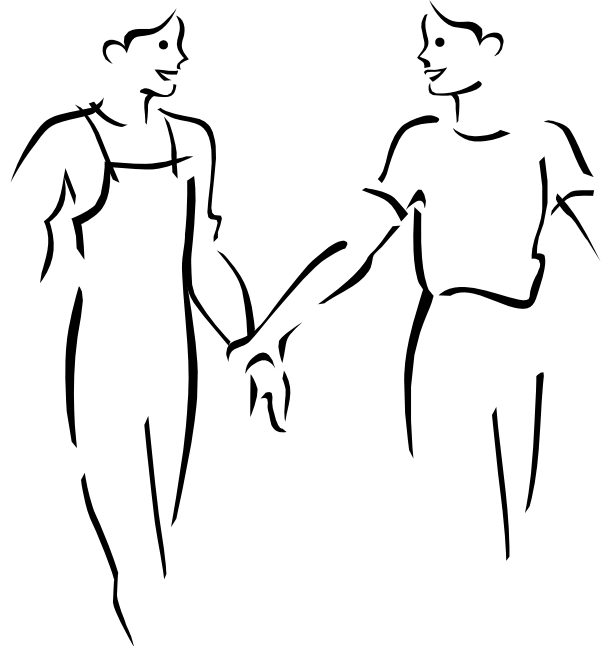
It is the oldest and longest continuously held lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) conference in the world and has inspired the founding of over 15 sober LGBT roundups in the US and Canada. The San Francisco LGBT sober community holds various fundraisers, including rummage sales, drag shows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



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.



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MAIL CHECK TO: Central Office with this request for subscription to *The Point* — 1821 SACRAMENTO ST., SF CA 94109

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).



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 Bedevilments 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.

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.



(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

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

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.



Serenity in the Park



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 revoke 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 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

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. sfteservice@aasf.org

aa group contributions

Fellowship Contributions	Apr. 10	YTD
Anonymous		\$ 500
Brisbane Breakfast Bunch	\$ 40	\$ 98
Contribution Box		\$ 319
Deer Park Discovery Group	\$ 15	\$ 15
From the Start to the Finish	\$ 120	\$ 120
Gay Newcomers Group	\$ 20	\$ 20
IFB	\$ 133	\$ 493
MCYPAA		\$ 250
Pax West M 12pm	\$ 243	\$ 243
San Francisco Young People in A.A.		\$ 800
Serenity House	\$ 150	\$ 450
Sunset Group (Napa)	\$ 18	\$ 18
Fellowship Total	\$ 739	\$ 3,325

Marin Contributions	Apr. 10	YTD
12 & 12 Study Sa 815am		\$ 226
A Vision for You (Fairfax) Su 730pm		\$ 63
Attitude Adjustment 7D 7am		\$ 1,395
Awakenings Sa 830am		\$ 33
Awareness/Acceptance M 1030am		\$ 155
Be Still AA Su 12pm		\$ 46
Beginners & Closed Tu 7pm & 830pm		\$ 410
Blackie's Pasture Sa 830pm	\$ 135	\$ 135
Caledonia Sun 8pm		\$ 250
Closed Women Step Study Tu 330pm	\$ 148	\$ 324
Cover to Cover W 800pm		\$ 197
Creekside New Growth Sun 7pm		\$ 186
Crossroads Sun 12pm		\$ 749
Day At A Time 7D 630am	\$ 432	\$ 432
Downtown Mill Valley F 830pm	\$ 343	\$ 343
Four Horsemen Thu 7pm		\$ 25
Freedom Finders F 830pm	\$ 321	\$ 321
Friday Night Book F 830pm	\$ 179	\$ 179
Friday Night Gay Men's Stag F 830pm	\$ 96	\$ 96
Girls Night Out W 815pm		\$ 75
Gratitude Tu 8pm		\$ 424
Greenfield Newcomers Sun 7pm		\$ 569
Happy Destiny F 7pm		\$ 83
Happy, Joyous & Free 5D 12pm		\$ 1,250
High & Dry W 12pm	\$ 182	\$ 285
Intimate Feelings Sa 10am	\$ 223	\$ 223
Inverness Sunday Serenity Su 10am	\$ 140	\$ 140
Island Group Th 8pm		\$ 167
Marin City Groups 5D 630pm	\$ 65	\$ 188
Marin Young People F 830pm		\$ 30
Mill Valley 7D 7am	\$ 613	\$ 1,363
Mill Valley Discussion W 830pm		\$ 219
Monday Blues M 630pm	\$ 432	\$ 432
Monday Night Women's M 8pm	\$ 166	\$ 331
Monday Nooners M 12pm		\$ 389
Morning Attitude Adjustment	\$ 100	\$ 100
Nativity Monday Night Big Book M 8pm	\$ 100	\$ 100
Newcomers Step M 730pm		\$ 307

Marin Contributions	Apr. 10	YTD
Noon Hope F 12pm		\$ 189
Novato Monday Stag M 8pm		\$ 300
On Awakening 7D 530am		\$ 525
Pathfinders Tu 12pm		\$ 200
Primary Purpose W 830pm		\$ 140
Refugee Th 12pm	\$ 60	\$ 220
Reveille 5D 7am	\$ 300	\$ 700
Rise N Shine Sun 10am		\$ 447
San Geronimo Valley M 8pm		\$ 38
Saturday Women's Speaker Sa 6pm		\$ 240
Serendipity Sa 11am	\$ 163	\$ 163
Six O'Clock Sunset Th 6pm	\$ 81	\$ 278
Sober & Serene F 7pm		\$ 531
Spiritual Testost. Sun Men's Stag Su 830a		\$ 175
Steps To The Solution W 715pm	\$ 109	\$ 211
Stinson Beach Fellowship Th 8pm		\$ 100
Streetfighters Sa 9am	\$ 43	\$ 43
Sunday Express Sun 6pm		\$ 200
Sunday Friendship Sun 7pm		\$ 200
Sunday Night Corte Madera Sun 8pm		\$ 200
Sunlight of the Spirit Th 7pm		\$ 100
Terra Linda Group Th 830pm		\$ 250
The Fearless Searchers F 8pm		\$ 38
There is a Solution Tu 6pm		\$ 166
Thursday Night Book Club Th 7pm	\$ 75	\$ 75
Thursday Night Speaker Th 830pm	\$ 463	\$ 2,052
Tiburon Haven Sun 12pm	\$ 258	\$ 258
Tiburon Women's Candlelight W 8pm		\$ 148
Tuesday Twelve Step Tu 630pm		\$ 20
We, Us and Ours M 650pm		\$ 200
Wednesday Night Candlelight W 8pm		\$ 296
What's It All About F 12pm		\$ 200
Women on Monday M 7pm		\$ 85
Women's Big Book Tu 1030am		\$ 250
Women's Meeting Su 430pm		\$ 56
Women's Step Study Group M 12pm	\$ 200	\$ 200
Working Dogs W 1205pm		\$ 406
Marin Total	\$ 5,427	\$ 22,138

San Francisco Contributions	Apr. 10	YTD
10am Step Study M 10am		\$ 60
6am Dry Dock 7D		\$ 53
6am Dry Dock W	\$ 78	\$ 250
7am As Bill Sees It Fri	\$ 23	\$ 86
7am Living Sober W 7am		\$ 71
7am Speaker Discussion Th 7am		\$ 100
830am Smokeless F 830am		\$ 208
A is for Alcohol Tu 6pm	\$ 23	\$ 23
A New Start F 830pm		\$ 680
A Vision for You (SF) Su 630pm		\$ 100
AA Step Study Su 6pm		\$ 57
Acceptance Group M 530pm		\$ 71
Afro American Beginners Sat 8pm		\$ 41

San Francisco Contributions	Apr. 10	YTD
Afro American F 8pm		\$ 35
After Work M 6PM	\$ 60	\$ 60
Alumni W 830pm		\$ 206
As Bill Sees It Tu 1210pm		\$ 73
Be Still AA Su 12pm	\$ 63	\$ 185
Beginner Big Book Step Th 630pm		\$ 77
Beginners 12 x 12 F 7pm		\$ 360
Beginners Mtg (Old Sutter St) Sat 6pm	\$ 275	\$ 706
Beginners' Step Study Sat 630pm		\$ 434
Beginner's Warmup W 6pm	\$ 45	\$ 45
Bernal New Day 7D	\$ 430	\$ 909
Big Book Basics F 8pm	\$ 170	\$ 298
Big Book Study Su 1130am		\$ 135
Blue Book Special Su 11am		\$ 217
Buena Vista Breakfast Su 12pm		\$ 129
Came To Believe Su 830am		\$ 105
Castro Monday Big Book M 830pm		\$ 115
Chips Ahoy Tu 12pm		\$ 106
Cocoanuts Su 9am		\$ 23
Code Blue Big Book Study W 7pm	\$ 24	\$ 110
Common Welfare Th 8pm		\$ 151
Cow Hollow Men's Group W 8pm	\$ 262	\$ 481
Dark Secrets F 10pm		\$ 71
Design for Living Sat 8am	\$ 23	\$ 401
Doin' the Deal Sun 10pm		\$ 86
Each Day a New Beginning F 7am		\$ 927
Each Day a New Beginning M 7am	\$ 300	\$ 300
Each Day a New Beginning Th 7am		\$ 553
Each Day a New Beginning Tu 7am	\$ 243	\$ 522
Each Day a New Beginning W 7am		\$ 299
Early Start F 6pm		\$ 1,205
Embarcadero Group 5D 1210pm		\$ 459
Eureka Valley Topic M 6pm		\$ 577
Excelsior "Scent" Free for All Sa 8pm	\$ 60	\$ 120
Extreme Makeover M 730pm	\$ 94	\$ 94
Federal Speaker Su 12pm		\$ 244
Fell Street F 830pm		\$ 30
Firefighters & Friends Tu 10am		\$ 446
Fireside Chat Group Tu 8pm		\$ 176
Friday All Groups F 830pm		\$ 269
Friday Lunchtime Step F 12pm		\$ 111
Friday Smokeless F 830pm		\$ 195
Friendly Circle Beginners Su 715pm		\$ 224
Full Flight From Reality Sa 1230pm		\$ 129
Happy Destiny Sa 630pm		\$ 38
Happy Hour Ladies Night F 530pm		\$ 28
High Noon Friday 1215pm	\$ 37	\$ 448
High Noon Thursday 1215pm		\$ 205
High Noon Tuesday 1215pm		\$ 628
High Noon Wednesday 1215pm		\$ 210
Hilldwellers M 8pm		\$ 137
How Was Your Week? Sa 10am		\$ 56
Huntington Square W 630pm	\$ 167	\$ 334

San Francisco Contributions	Apr. 10	YTD
Joys of Recovery Tu 8pm	\$ 29	
Just Alkies F 7pm	\$ 75	
Keep Coming Back Sa 11am	\$ 332	
Light Brigade Discussion Su 7pm	\$ 120	
Like A Prayer Su 4pm	\$ 100	
Lincoln Park Sat 830pm	\$ 92	
Live and Let Live Su 8pm	\$ 574	
Living Sober W 8pm	\$ 306	
Living Sober with HIV W 6pm	\$ 84	\$ 84
Luke's Group W 7pm	\$ 60	\$ 60
Luke's Group W 8pm	\$ 70	
Lush Lounge Sa 2pm	\$ 205	\$ 205
Meeting Place Noon F 12pm	\$ 174	
Meeting Place Noon W 12pm	\$ 100	
Mid-Morning Support Su 1030am	\$ 281	\$ 508
Midnight Meditation Sat 12am	\$ 24	
Miracle (Way) Off 24th St W 730pm	\$ 96	
Mission Terrace W 8pm	\$ 60	
Monday Beginners M 8pm	\$ 100	\$ 280
Monday Men's Meeting M 8pm	\$ 375	
Monday Monday M 1215pm	\$ 80	
New Life W 7pm	\$ 60	\$ 195
Newcomers Tu 8pm	\$ 168	
No Reservation M 12pm	\$ 696	
Noon Smokeless F 12pm	\$ 14	\$ 128
Noon Smokeless W 12pm	\$ 255	
Off Broadway Book Th 730pm	\$ 36	
One, Two, Three, Go! W 1pm	\$ 10	
Parkside Th 830pm	\$ 189	\$ 255
Pax West Th 12pm	\$ 175	\$ 443
Potrero Hill 12 x 12 M 630pm	\$ 67	
Queers, Crackpots & Fallen Women	\$ 180	
Rebound W 830pm	\$ 60	\$ 60

San Francisco Contributions	Apr. 10	YTD
Relapse,Rebound,Retreads & Winners	\$ 84	
Richmond Step Study M 730pm	\$ 86	\$ 86
Rigorous Honesty Th 1205pm	\$ 35	
Room to Grow F 8pm	\$ 123	\$ 258
Rule 62 W 10pm	\$ 85	
Saturday Night Regroup Sat 730pm	\$ 398	
Say Hey Group M, Tu, F 6pm	\$ 160	
Second Chance Th 215pm	\$ 28	\$ 28
Serenity House	\$ 150	
Serenity in the Park W 7pm	\$ 30	
Serenity Seekers M 730pm	\$ 226	
Sesame Step Tu 730pm	\$ 108	
Shamrocks & Serenity M 730pm	\$ 200	\$ 586
Sinbar Su 830pm	\$ 194	
Sober Across the Board M-Sa 830am	\$ 133	
Sober at State MW 1210pm	\$ 15	\$ 15
Sometimes Slowly Sa 11am	\$ 334	
Sp. Founded Prog. Of Action (SFPOA)	\$ 425	
Step Talk Su 830am	\$ 169	\$ 588
Steppin' Up Tu 630pm	\$ 214	
Stepping Out Sat 6pm	\$ 34	
Stonestown M 8pm	\$ 100	
Sunday Bookworms Sun 730pm	\$ 120	
Sunday Morning Gay Men's Stag	\$ 535	
Sunday Night 3rd Step Group 5pm	\$ 384	
Sunday Night Castro Speaker Disc Su 8pm	\$ 73	\$ 431
Sunday Silence Su 730pm	\$ 50	
Sunrise Sunset Women's Step Th 6pm	\$ 236	
Sunset 11'ers F	\$ 25	
Sunset 11'ers Sa	\$ 57	
Sunset 11'ers W	\$ 84	
Sunset 9'ers M	\$ 42	
Sunset 9'ers Su	\$ 312	

San Francisco Contributions	Apr. 10	YTD
Sunset 9'ers Tu	\$ 2	
Sunset 9'ers W	\$ 188	
Sunset Speaker Step Sun 730pm	\$ 219	
Surf Tu 8pm	\$ 127	\$ 127
Ten Years After Su 6pm	\$ 120	\$ 961
The 12 Schleppers Th 8pm	\$ 80	
The Lads Fr 730pm	\$ 100	\$ 100
The Parent Trap M 1230pm	\$ 153	
They Stopped In Time M 8pm	\$ 47	
Thursday Morning Men's BB Study	\$ 575	
Too Early Sat 8am	\$ 167	\$ 917
Tuesday Big Book Study Tu 6pm	\$ 60	
Tuesday Downtown Tu 8pm	\$ 64	\$ 64
Tuesday Night Step Tu 7pm	\$ 22	
Valencia Smokefree F 6pm	\$ 73	
Walk of Shame W 8pm	\$ 159	
Waterfront Sun 8pm	\$ 431	
We Care Tu 12pm	\$ 146	\$ 256
Wednesday Morning Men's Meeting	\$ 146	
West Portal W 8pm	\$ 115	\$ 115
Wharfrats Th 815pm	\$ 62	\$ 88
What It's Like Now M 6pm	\$ 92	
Women Living Sober Sa 10am	\$ 120	
Women Who Drank Too Much	\$ 8	
Women's 10 Years Plus Th 615pm	\$ 107	
Women's Kitchen Table Group	\$ 359	
Women's Mtg There is a Solution	\$ 411	\$ 411
Women's Promises F 7pm	\$ 492	
Work In Progress Sat 7pm	\$ 613	
YAHOO Step Sa 1130am	\$ 140	
San Francisco Total	\$ 5,607	\$36,188
Total Contributions	\$11,773	\$61,652

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

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Write to THE POINT! — The Point Committee values your input

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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, only instead of asking that my



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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