

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

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

# The Point

2012 **4**  
**April**

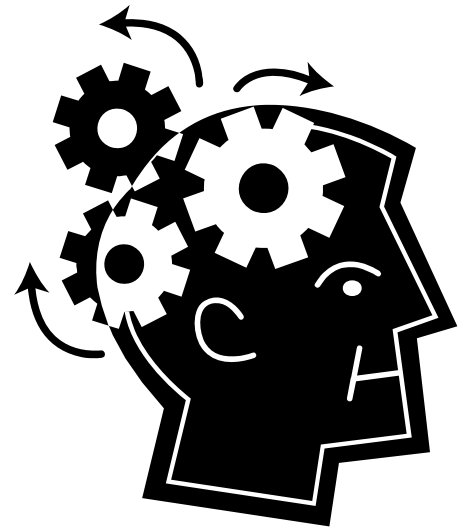
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## *The Point*

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

# Emotional and Mental Disorders



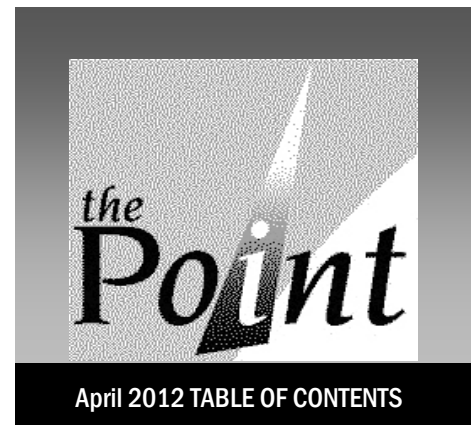
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# April 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
1	2	3 <u>FIRST TUE</u> Access Committee Central Office 6pm	4 <u>FIRST WED</u> Intergroup Meeting 1187 Franklin St. Orientation 6pm Meeting 7pm
8	9 <u>SECOND MON</u> SF PI/CPC (Public Information/ Cooperation with the Professional Community Committee Central Office 7pm	10 <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	11 <u>SECOND WED</u> Marin Bridging the Gap 1360 Lincoln Ave San Rafael Alano Club 6:30pm
15 <u>THIRD SUN</u> Archives Committee Central Office 2pm Business Meeting followed by Work Day	16 <u>THIRD MON</u> SF Teleservice Central Office 6:30pm Marin General Service 9 Ross Valley Rd San Rafael 8pm	17 SF PI/CPC Speaker Workshop Central Office 7pm See flyer on p. 17	18
22	23	24 <u>FOURTH TUE</u> <i>The Point</i> Committee Central Office 5:30pm Marin Teleservice 1360 Lincoln Ave San Rafael Alano Club 7:30pm	25
30	31		

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
5	6	7
12	13	14
19	20	21
<u>26</u> <b>LAST THU</b> SF H&I Old First Church, 1751 Sacramento St, SF Orientation 7pm Business Meeting 8pm	28	29

*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.*



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“Sometimes there are cases where alcoholism is complicated by other disorders. A good doctor or psychiatrist can tell you whether these complications are serious.”

*Big Book, p. 114*

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## Meeting Changes

### New Meetings:

Tue	5:30pm	San Rafael
Thu	5:30pm	San Rafael
Sat	8:30pm	Castro

QUITTING TIME 9 Ross Valley Dr. at Greenfield Ave. (now five days per week)  
QUITTING TIME 9 Ross Valley Dr. at Greenfield Ave. (now five days per week)  
449ers 4058 18th St. at Hartford St.

### Meeting Changes:

Sat	7:00pm	Castro
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BEGINNERS' STEP STUDY 501 Castro at 18th St. (was at Castro Country Club at 6:30pm)

### No Longer Meeting: None Reported

**PLEASE NOTE:** We occasionally receive reports that meetings listed in our schedule are missing or no longer active. Sometimes these reports turn out to be mistaken—and sometimes not. **If you know *anything* about a meeting that has relocated or disbanded — even if only temporarily — please call Central Office immediately: (415) 674-1821.** This helps us direct newcomers, visitors and sober, local alcoholics alike to actual meetings and not to rooms that housed a meeting once upon a time. ***Thank you for contributing to the accuracy of our schedule!***

## Anniversary Party

**Sunday**  
**04/29/12**

Potluck: 5pm-6pm  
Meeting: 6pm-7pm  
50/50 Raffle



Join us to Celebrate the Mission Fellowship 2900  
12th Anniversary  
@ 2900 24th St. (at Florida St.)

***Potluck dishes and desserts welcomed!***





# Grave Disorders

by Jane K.

The Big Book says that the grave emotional and mental disorders afflicting some of us with the disease of alcoholism need not impede our recovery, if we can be honest. And it is only those who cannot be honest who do not recover, whether or not emotionally and mentally afflicted. In my mind, that makes dishonesty the sole disorder that can lead to the alcoholic grave. Yes, pun intended, but it isn't a funny one. It's deadly serious.

Several of our writers in this issue broach the topic of mental and emotional illnesses in brave and honest articles that deserve your attention. Rita L. and Nichol S. (pages 7 and 10, respectively) discuss depression in their lives and the special challenges it presents to the alcoholic.

I commend to you the article by local member Mark C., reprinted from a new General Service pamphlet entitled, "A.A. and the Alcoholic with Special Needs." Mark's story is inspiring and demonstrates a close acquaintance with honesty, as well as an overwhelming gratitude. Mark invites your email correspondence; see p. 6 for more detail.

In this issue, we initiate a series of occasional interviews on how individual members practice the 11<sup>th</sup> Step ("Conscious Contact," p. 8). Obviously, these are illustrative "case studies" and not intended to be prescriptive, but how we practice the 11<sup>th</sup> Step is often shrouded in mystery and rarely discussed at the group level, at least in my experience. Sometimes members "decline to state" their spiritual practice for fear of confirming the newcomer's preconceptions that A.A. is a religious cult; some may simply be unable to describe the ineffable. Well, we here at *The Point* intend to take you where angels fear to tread (so to speak). Stay tuned and let us know if you like the new feature.

Regular readers may notice that some of the articles in this issue are longer than typical for our newsletter. That's because we needed more room to cover the complex topics, but it's also because we aren't getting as many articles as we need to fill our pages. That's where you come in, dear readership. Any topic related to A.A. or your recovery is welcome and needed. It's service you can do at your keyboard in your jammies: send to [thepoint@aasf.org](mailto:thepoint@aasf.org).



## 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](http://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:

Alejandro D.	John G.	Peg L.
Andrea C.	John M.	Pene P.
Andy Z.	John V.	Penelope C.
Ardella H.	Karen C.	Philip B.
Barbara L.	Karen K.	Ralph P.
Barbara M.	Kate R.	Ralf Z.
Blu F.	Kathleen C.	Rich G.
Brian O.	Kathryn M.	Robert C.
Bruce K.	Kevin S.	Ron H.
Bruce S.	Kristina F.	Samuel W.
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Caroline A.	Lauren H.	Scott H.
Casey L.	Layne S.	Sheila H.
Cathy P.	Lelan & Rich H.	Steve A.
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David J.	Mark O.	Tracy F.
David S.	Martha S.	William M.
Dennis & Lucy O.	Mary C.	
Dianne E.	Mary L.	Your
Ed H.	Maryellen O.	Name
Eric P.	Mia M.	Here!
Erin S.	Michael G.	
Evan K.	Michael P.	Or
Fay K.	Michael W.	Here!
Frederick D.	Michael Z.	
Gregory G.	Mike M.	Or
Ian M.	Molly G.	Here!
James W.	Nancy W.	
Jane K.	Nathaniel W.	
Janet B.	Niels R.	
Jeanne C.	Pat P.	
Jeff B.	Pat R.	
Jodie S.	Patrick M.	
John C.	Paul M.	

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!

# Grateful to Be Left-Handed

by Mark C.

*Mark's story is included in a new A.A. pamphlet entitled "A.A. and the Alcoholic with Special Needs." Mark is a local member whose home groups are Sober 5150s and Saturday Afternoon Meditation. His email address is mountains\_hike[at]hotmail.com and while he cannot respond, he enjoys receiving communications from other A.A.s and he asked that our readership write to him about this article or anything else.*

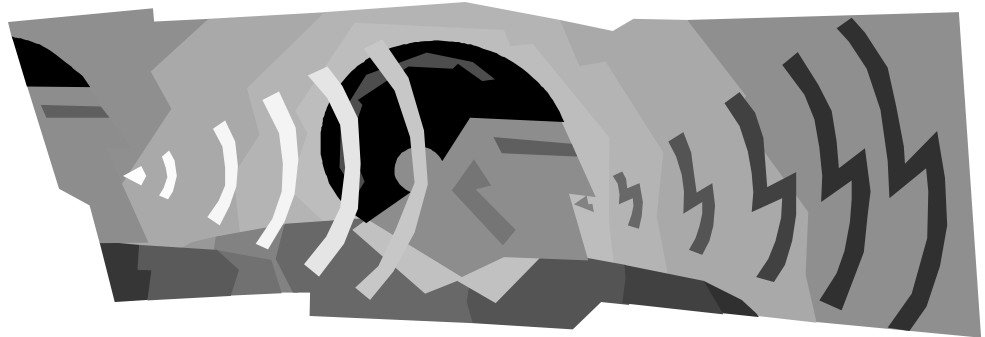
My sobriety anniversary is March 1, 2000. I have an acquired brain injury that affects my memory, causes seizures and painful headaches. I'm paralyzed on my right side, so I use a motorized wheelchair. The language center of my brain is damaged, so people have difficulty understanding my speech pattern and I struggle with writing. One of my A.A. friends has typed my story.

I use a small computer called a Dynovox that employs visual clues, word processing and imitates the human voice. It is slow, inaccurate and cumbersome, but I'm grateful to have it to bridge the great divide between my mind and the mind of another. Whatever it is that makes me a unique human being is still intact. I just have a hard time expressing myself.

I was born in 1959. In high school I was tested as having an IQ of 140, and I made my living as a computer repairperson. The company I worked for downsized and I was caught in a mass layoff. My alcoholism was well entrenched and I became

immobilized with fear over facing an uncertain job market. Eventually I ran out of money and was no longer able to afford the rent on my comfortable house in California.

I became homeless and sought relief at a local shelter, where a man tried to steal the remainder of my slender belongings. We got into an altercation, and he hit a stone over my head. I was hospitalized and doctors warned me that I had to quit drinking or I could end up in a coma, followed by death. Denial about my alcoholism prevailed; I left the hospital against medical advice and drank again. Next, I fell down a flight of stairs and injured the same spot on my skull. This time I was paralyzed, yet have survived six brain surgeries.



I've lived in a long-term care facility for almost a decade. The first three years I couldn't speak, write, read, or walk and a nurse had to feed me. I still can't use my right arm. Slowly I got better, but I couldn't remember how to reach the people I cared about. My family was worried sick, yet after seven years they finally found me via searches on the Internet. Words can't express how grateful I am to have them back in my life.

Eventually, I discovered A.A. meetings were being held where I live. My improved condition enabled me to also attend meetings outside the hospital. Many meeting halls aren't wheelchair accessible, but I remember how much effort I devoted to getting my supply of alcohol, so I'm willing to do what it takes to find accessible meetings.

It's hard to make friends because people have difficulty communicating with me. But I do have close friends in A.A. whom I care about and they care about me. Every week I attend several meetings and people seem happy to see me when I come in the room. Someone will get me a cup of decaf and they already know how I take it. The meeting secretary always saves a

spot for me where I can park my wheelchair. A small table is set-up where I can rest my Dynovox and refreshments. Often the secretary has asked me to use my Dynovox to recite selections from A.A. literature. If I want to share during the meeting, my friends will interpret while I use my Dynovox or my own voice. I've even been the main speaker on several occasions. This has been achieved by having my friends

*(Continued on page 17)*



by Rita L.

I have always been depressed. As a child, I was painfully shy, had few friends, and, from the start, learned to entertain myself.

As soon as I learned to read, I got a library card and used it. I checked out stacks of books at a time, and loved losing myself (and finding myself) in reading. As a child of the 1950s, I read the Bobbsey Twins series. (My friends were Bert and Nan, age 12, Flossie and Freddie, age 6, Snoop the cat and Snap the dog.) I read the text on the Rice Krispies package at breakfast every morning. I read the steamy portions of Peyton Place (trying to teach myself the facts of life) on my parents' shelves. I read everything I could get my hands on and my imagination around.

When I was not reading, I was riding my black English racer three-speed bicycle through my suburbs. (When my father first brought home the bike from the Pep Boys store, he had to install wooden blocks on the pedals so I could reach them. I soon grew into being able to reach the pedals on my own.) The bike was like an extension of my body. Every day after school and all summer long, I would ride through the neighborhood. Other kids were playing together, but I was riding my bike, solo.

Reading is, of course, good. Riding a bike is also, of course, good. But, doing so instead of socializing, which for me would have been agonizing,

## DEPRESSION IN RECOVERY

***“There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.”***

was not terribly healthy. I can see this only in retrospect, from the vantage point of recovery.

I also self-medicated with sugar. My weekly allowance was spent on comic books and penny candy (Necco Wafers, Jujubes, candy corn, candy Dots, and other retro sugar treats full of red dye #2 and blue dye #5). We drank soda with every supper. And, I ate a whole column of Hydrox cookies (the New Jersey version of Oreos) before supper. In retrospect, I see that I did this to numb myself to my rage-aholic father's nightly diatribe about everything that was imperfect in us, and what a difficult day he had had, and how hard he was working for his ungrateful kids. Stoned on sugar, I was able to fend off his scathing

### *It is a daily struggle.*

criticism. (Many years later, I am working hard in therapy to evict the internalized oppressor who still resides, uninvited, in my head trying to run – or is it ruin? – my life.)

Around age 16, I added pot and booze to my personal pharmacopeia. I stay stoned until the age of 40, when I was finally able to get off the not-so-merry-go-round of daily drugging.

About two minutes after getting clean and sober (and, in my case, smoke-free as well), I made the



mistake of falling in lust, I mean love. Our year together was delicious: the world's best sex replaced the drugs that I'd been holding myself together with all my life. But, when that relationship failed, and I was left alone, I realized I had traded my entire self (such as it was) for a loved one's love, and I had no self left: I fell into a dark and deep pit of despair. Luckily, some good friends in N.A. and A.A. steered me into Alanon, where I was able to slowly build a bit of a genuine self.

Also at this time (the beginning of my second year of sobriety), I gave in to my therapist's repeated suggestion that I try antidepressants. The argument was, if I tried antidepressants and they worked, that would indicate that the wet grey blanket of depression I'd lived under my whole life was, at least in part,

*(Continued on page 19)*

# Conscious Contact

## Quieting the Noise in My Head

by the Drunk Whisperer

*This is the first in an occasional series of interviews on practicing the Eleventh Step.*

This anonymous A.A. got sober on June 13, 1991 in San Francisco. She initiated our conversation with laughter, noting how, in spite of a prolonged period of meditation in preparation, she was stressing about the interview.

I asked her whether she had had difficulty with Steps Two and Three the first time she did the steps in A.A.

“Not with Step Two. I believed there was a God when I came into A.A., but I believed in a cruel, malevolent God who wanted to punish me. I grew up in a violent household and I would pray that God would take me out of it, or that God would destroy my mother. When I told this to my first sponsor, she said, ‘the good news is that you believe in God; the bad news for you is that in A.A. we have a loving Higher Power. Are you willing



to be willing to believe that you might be wrong?’ I knew I wasn’t wrong, but I said ‘yes’ anyway. I liked that my sponsor listened to me and really seemed interested in what I had to say.

“At the beginning of each session together, that sponsor would take my hands and ask me to say the Third Step prayer with her. I hated the Third Step prayer. I wasn’t ready to turn my will and life over to what I believed was a vengeful God. ‘Just say it, you don’t have to mean it,’ she advised me. She pointed out that ‘it’s not all about you,’ (a message she would repeat to me on a regular basis). She said that the prayer was important for her, to clear herself so that she could work with me, a sponsee, from a centered place.

“Before I got sober, I went to yoga classes searching for a solution to my misery. Yoga was important for introducing me to the notion that I could quiet my mind. The physical part was noncompetitive, and we did it with our eyes closed. For me, who always felt I was being watched and judged, this was important. Class ended with a short meditation period. This was my first introduction to this practice that turned out to be so important for me. Yoga was also important because I met a woman in class who was in A.A. and she introduced me to the program.

“My process gradually moved from a yogic meditation, where I used an external focus (a candle flame, a mantra) to one that is much more



internal. Just me and my breath. I had a lot of self-judgment starting out. It took years before my mind would shut up and I could sit for 40 minutes of meditation without the hindrances of fear and doubt arising constantly.

“The Eleventh Step is near the end of the steps for a reason. I have found that meditation can be difficult for a newly sober person. The noise in the head is too loud. When I was drinking, I thought I was too small and too scared to have any real impact in the world. But in doing my Ninth Step, I realized that I had had a strong impact on others. I hurt a lot of people and I needed to clean up my side of the street. After working the steps and clearing out resentments, fears, and harms, my mind became more tranquil and the ability to focus and meditate increased.

“Before I got sober, I used to run away from difficulties. I was absent when called upon, especially around illness and death. Buddhism acknowledges suffering in the world and the idea that we cannot change that fact. In A.A. we learn to ‘accept the things we cannot change.’ Today, I do volunteer work where I am present for ill and disabled people. I can suit up and show up for life on life’s terms. I just do the footwork and leave the results to my Higher Power. And I can listen to what other people have to say, especially sponsees, without making it ‘all about me.’ Meditation has improved

*(Continued on page 19)*





# YEAR OF THE TWELVE

## *A Dark & Stormy Fourth Step*

by Suzan C.

It lives in a brown folder that closes with an elastic strap. The canary paper inside has faded to a paler shade. Each page is folded into four columns. The writing is small and compact, tense as the hand that penned it. These sheets chronicle my darkest days. While writing and remembering, it seemed as if my tears splattered on every page. Now as I read the little chapters of my social history, I shift between smiles and laughter, sighs and groans, cringes and shudders. My accounting of spiritual bankruptcy took weeks to produce. I slogged through it at the same kitchen counter where I previously drank sweet liqueurs in the middle of the night to cure insomnia. I wrote, I wept, I sat numb from fatigue; I questioned the purpose of it all. But I persisted until there was nothing left to say.

In the first column, there were people I resented, their offenses vividly captured in my memory, but not always their names. Some appear on the list as “surfer with blue pickup truck” or “red headed guy from bookstore.” There are immediate and extended family members, cruel school teachers, playground bullies, sexual predators, college professors, hard-nosed cops, cheating boyfriends, mean girlfriends, and unfair bosses. There are cities, countries, educational institutions, entire segments of humanity, and cigarettes.

The causes of my resentment, in the second column, were numerous. But there were notable repetitions, such

as unfairness and exploitation. The aspects of my life that were harmed, listed in the third column, were usually self esteem, finances, relationships and reputation (such as it was). My part in causing all these problems (the fourth column) repeated itself like notes from

someone’s psychiatric evaluation: “put unreasonable expectations on others, depended too much on others, did not take responsibility for own welfare, low self esteem, unreasonable expectations, excessive dependency, irresponsible, inferiority complex, unreasonable, dependent, avoidant, fearful.”

I decided on my own to conduct Step Four and a Half. I looked at all the patterns I saw in the fourth column and tried to boil them down to their essentials. I listed them in order of frequency and studied them. In order to imagine myself one day living a better life, I made a list of the opposites of the character defects I had listed. These included honesty, responsibility, acceptance, confidence, and independence. I knew it wasn’t yet time for Steps Seven and Eight. But it helped me to know that all the sludge dredged up by my Fourth Step did not have to sit and harden into my destiny. With that little bit of hope and courage, I called my sponsor and told her I was ready to take my Fifth Step whenever she

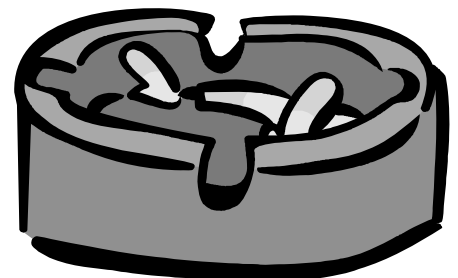
had a few hours and several empty ashtrays.

When my Fifth Step was complete, I thought about what to do with the physical evidence of my Fourth Step. There could be no more incriminating document than this one, should it fall into the wrong

*It helped me to know that all the sludge dredged up by my Fourth Step did not have to sit and harden into my destiny.*

hands. Yet I could not bear to destroy this product of my struggles. So I have kept it, in the brown folder, in the box marked “personal” in the corner of the garage. I will not bring it out at a party for laughs. I will not read it to my spouse, friend, employer, or child. For the sake of my heirs, I must remember to remember to burn it before I die. I will sit alone by the fire and read it one last time. Then let each page release the past in a flurry of flames, illuminating the splendor that has been my sober life.

**TP**



# The Goddess Within and Throughout

by Nichol S.

For the past six months to a year I have been struggling with feelings of anxiety and depression. I celebrated two years of sobriety last month and my alcoholic brain keeps saying, "What's wrong with you? You were more productive when you were drinking!"

The truth is, I've always been a functional alcoholic, but even though I have days now when I feel lazy, worthless and unproductive, I'm not! When I share in a meeting, on the phone or one on one with someone else, I realize that I've actually been working through a lot of things. For example, last week I was tired and had an "agenda" in my head, my body was slowing me down and my heart was sad. I had things to do! So I became irritated with myself and others. When I expressed my aggravation, a friend responded, "Relax, take it easy. You just wrote and sent a letter to your sister who you haven't spoken to in four months. Give yourself some time to

*when my health  
started to dissipate, ...  
my depression  
intensified*

process and feel that." I then realized that, unless I'm physically doing something, I am relentless with myself, but processing feelings and emotions is *just as important*. So I am learning to be kind and patient with myself since I never really allowed myself to process emotions. I was used to always shoving them down and pushing through and doing

something to avoid feeling.

My standards of productivity have been set higher the longer I stay sober. However, I accomplish more now and feel amazing and peaceful 70% of the time. But when my health started to dissipate on many levels, I became very physically limited, my depression intensified in combination with fatigue, mental pain and hopelessness.

For weeks it became more painful; unhealthy family relationships were brutal and so I put a wall up and disconnected. I continued to go to meetings, meet my sponsor, show up to my commitments, talk to friends in and outside the program; but nothing really lifted the internal mental pain and anxiety for the more than an hour.

One week I started having excruciating abdominal pain late at night into the early morning and I almost started to lose consciousness. I didn't want to call and wake up anyone, and I could barely move or speak. I just kept repeating the word "love" in my head, over and over, until finally I focused on photos that I took that I love, then photos of my family, then focused on happy memories of my family and I just kept breathing deeply.

Then I began to pray (like I never had) to the goddess (my higher power) as if she were in front of me and asked her to help me: to let go of the pain, to stay conscious, to get through this, to be okay, to heal and to help me love

myself no matter what happened. As the weeks passed I began to meditate and pray three to five times a day for an extended period of time.

One day after this meditation, I became inspired to paint and then a week later I started with basic acrylics and a canvas. With a very limited budget of \$40, I made a few paintings by mixing my own colors: yellow and red equals orange. I began to feel better, I stopped looking outward for the answers to my physical, mental and emotional well-being and realized most of the answers came from within through meditation and prayer. It came from connecting within and actively communicating, then listening to my higher power; she loves me and has my back always!

NP



# PRE-A.A. HISTORY INSTALLMENT 1

A Pre-AA History Book Series

by GFG

*Starting this month and continuing forward, The Point will publish an edited, serialized version of a 24-page booklet, "A Pre-A.A. History Book," written by Bob S.*

## From the Forward

The purpose of this book is to present a brief sketch of A.A. pre-history in hopes of attracting an interest in the exciting past of Alcoholics Anonymous. This book does not attempt to delve deeply into pre-A.A., but includes a number of short snippets that may be interesting for the casual type reader. There are many wonderful books on this subject which are approved by the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous, of which I have made much use during this writing, as well as many outside books too numerous to mention, so I will not try. But thank you!

This book is my own doing and is not endorsed by any Alcoholics Anonymous Group, District, Area or GSO or other agency of Alcoholics Anonymous. The information herein is history as I found it, but that does not mean that it is definitely correct one hundred percent. History is that way.

## First Pre-A.A. Founding Event

The Big Book relates the story of an alcoholic American businessman, Rowland Hazard, who placed himself under the care of Dr. Carl Jung; however, the doctor's treatment was unsuccessful. Jung advised Rowland that his only hope for sobriety was a spiritual experience.

A.A. lore has this event taking place during 1931 – Cebra Graves told Bill

Wilson that Rowland informed him that the meeting took place in 1930 or 1931.

## Carl Jung's Original Letter to Bill Wilson

Dear Mr. Wilson,

*Your letter has been very welcome indeed.*

*I had no news from Roland H. anymore and often wondered what has been his fate. Our conversation which he has adequately reported to you had an aspect of which he did not know. The reason that I could not tell him everything was that those days I had to be exceedingly careful of what I said. I had found out that I was misunderstood in every possible way. Thus I was very careful when I talked to Roland H. But what I really thought about was the result of many experiences with men of his kind.*



*His craving for alcohol was the equivalent on a low level of the spiritual thirst of our being for wholeness, expressed in medieval language: the union with God.*

*How could one formulate such an insight in a language that is not misunderstood in our days?*

*The only right and legitimate way to such an experience is that it happens to you in reality and it can only happen to you when you walk on a path which lends you to higher understanding. You might be led to that goal by an act of grace or through a personal and honest*



*(Continued on page 17)*



Dear Help,

**My son has relapsed *again*, and as a result of his bad behavior has ended up *back* in jail. He is in a segregated section and there are not any meetings or A.A. (or N.A.) help provided. Please, please, can you send someone and send materials so that he can try again at recovery? E [pseudonym] from Jail Services has been some help, but does not have A.A. or N.A. material.**

**Jail # 4, 850 Bryant, 7th floor  
[prisoner name and number]  
SF 94103**

**I would be very grateful,**

**His Mom**

Dear Mom,

Does your son have access to a phone? Or mail? We have a committee [12<sup>th</sup> Step] who will match an alcoholic in need with a recovering alcoholic who will go meet him and take him to a meeting. We could probably match your son up with someone who will visit him in jail. However, your son would have to call us directly. Our office number is 415.674.1821. Our office is open 10am - 6pm Monday through Friday; the phone is answered 24/7 by recovering alcoholics who can speak to an alcoholic or family member and share his or her experience of incomprehensible demoralization. Our office address is: Central Office,

1821 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, 94102.

We have another committee [H&I] that provides literature to hospitals and other institutions. I will contact them to see if they can get literature to your son at 850 Bryant Street, 7th Floor (if you learn that your son's location has changed, please contact us right away).

This must be incredibly difficult for you. There is an organization that is for friends and family of alcoholics called Al-anon. The local website is [www.al-anonsf.org](http://www.al-anonsf.org). There are many meetings in San Francisco each week and you may be able to find some help there.

I will send prayers for you and your son.

Sincerely,

e-Volunteer

**Dear Help,**

**Is this a hotline where you can call someone just to talk about feelings accompanying alcoholism and the recovery process? I attend A.A. meetings and know about A.A., but I just want to talk to someone about what's going on in my head. I don't want to relapse and don't want to bother any of my friends with my illogical, alcoholic thoughts.**

**If the hotline can be used for this, how might I begin the conversation in order to make it**

**clear that is why I'm calling?**

**Thank you,**

**Lonely Alcoholic**

Hi, L.A.,

*Yes. You can call our number 24/7 to talk about the very things you mentioned. The phones are answered by volunteers in recovery, and these volunteers are accustomed to hearing from people during all phases of the recovery process.*

Our number is 415.674.1821 from San Francisco and 415.499.0400 from Marin County. You are also welcome to stop by our office at 1821 Sacramento Street, by the southwest corner at Van Ness (look for the A.A. symbol - a circle with an inscribed triangle). There are always at least two volunteers in addition to our staff members, all in recovery. The office is open Monday through Friday 10am - 6pm. As it turns out, I will be in tomorrow, Monday, from 10 - noon, so if you stop by, be sure to say hello.

You can tell the person who answers just what you wrote in your email: that you attend meetings and know about A.A., but you want to talk to someone about the noise in your head. The volunteer will surely relate to you and vice versa.

Sincerely,

e-Volunteer



# YEAR OF THE TWELVE

## Tradition Four

**“Each group should be autonomous  
except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.”**

by Gilbert G.

I'm an alcoholic. I admit it. I admit it publicly in this newsletter. As an alcoholic, I also collect resentments. One of my main resentments occurs after scanning A.A. meeting schedules and seeing “specialty” A.A. groups. I remember seeing closed meetings that were “men only,” “women only,” “young people,” “HIV,” “Hep C,” and “depressives” among others.

*How dare you  
try to prevent me  
from going to any  
meeting I choose?*

When I see meetings that are targeted toward particular audiences, I immediately think about Tradition Three: “The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.” Wait just one darn minute here you people. How dare you try to prevent me from going to any meeting I choose? When I am in a dire need of a meeting, I need a meeting right away and close to where I am at that moment. How dare a meeting not allow “... the hand of A.A. to be there ...” for me?

Well, the answer is in Tradition Four. Per the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, “... we had been given the courage to declare each A.A. group an individual entity, strictly reliant on its own conscience as a guide to action.” For each group, “Sobriety

had to be its sole objective. In all other respects there was perfect freedom of will and action.” “Every group had the right to be wrong.”

I learned a lot about Tradition Four one day while working my volunteer telephone shift at Central Office. I answered a telephone call from a distraught A.A. member. This person was upset by something that was occurring at that person's group. The person's claim was that the group was violating the anonymity of its members. This person then demanded to “speak to someone in charge who could do something about it.”

I forwarded the telephone call to the office manager. I could hear the office manager's voice as she talked to the caller and explained that A.A. Central Office could not tell a group how to manage its affairs. The office manager then proceeded to inform the caller that it was up to the group conscience to either continue or discontinue the practice in question. That's when I realized the extraordinary amount of power held by an A.A. group and its group conscience.

Each A.A. group has the power to manage itself as it sees fit. As long as the actions of the A.A. group do not affect other groups or A.A. as a whole, that group can do whatever its members want it to do. Wow, this knowledge is empowering, yet sobering. With this power comes

responsibility. With this responsibility comes humility. Groups can, and have, made decisions that they regretted and later reversed. “Every group had the right to be wrong.” With humility, any group can proceed forward, correct its “wrongs” and continue with our primary purpose: “... to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.”

Now when I attend new meetings and notice meeting-specific customs and procedures, I can appreciate the effort those groups had put into making those changes. I can think about what, at the group level, had led to those changes. I also guess at how long it probably took them to implement those changes. In one sense, it's like a sociological study. Change at any level of A.A. is possible, but at the meeting level, the group conscience rules.

**TP**



# IFB meeting summary – March 2012

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

Any Lengths	First Place	Living with HIV	Sesame Step	Too Early
Attitude Adjustment Hour	Friday Morning 12 Steppers	Marin Stag	Sober 5150's	Tuesday Beginners
Blue Book Special	Friendly Circle	Miracles (Way) Off 24th St.	Step Talk	Tuesday Chip
Came to Park	Girl's Night Out	No Reservation	Sunday Rap	Walk of Shame
Castro Discusion	High Noon	Noon Smokeless	Sunset Speaker Step	Waterfront
Code Blue	Huntington Square	On Awakening Group	Ten Years After	Wits End
Design for Living	Join The Tribe	Queers, Crackpots and Fallen Women	They Stopped In Time	Women's Mtg, There is a Solution
Each Day A New Beg (M-F)	Keep It Simple	Saturday Beginners	Thursday Night Speaker	
Each Day A New Beg (Su)	Live & Let Live	Saturday Easy Does It	Tiburon Haven Group	

This unofficial summary of the March 2012 Intergroup meeting 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 "Intergroup" on our website [www.aasf.org](http://www.aasf.org).

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 that individual groups cannot provide.

The monthly Intergroup meeting was held on Wednesday, March 7, 2012 at First Unitarian Universalist Church, 1187 Franklin at O'Farrell, San Francisco, CA

## Officer Reports

**Chair Report**, Margaret J.; Demonstrates the financial big picture of 2002-2011 income sources for Central Office. (Group, Individual contributions, Bookstore sales, etc.) Ex. In 2002 more than 70% of income came from group contributions, declining in recent years. Big growth has been with individual contributions, a large part coming from Faithful Fivers since 2005 at over \$65,000 total. Bookstore income smaller, some books sold at cost and margin reduced overall.

## Treasurer's Report, Michelle C.;

Major expense has been in rising health care costs over ten years from \$6,000 per year to \$15,000 now.

Report for January: Overall rating is Excellent. Group contributions were about \$22,000 or \$3,149 over projected, individual contributions \$2,600 or \$431 greater than projected. Employee expenses were \$400 under due to recent start of new employees for less than a full month. We ended January with a surplus of \$11,673.

## COC Report to be posted online.

**Central Office Manager Report**, Maury P.; We're fully staffed at CO and are starting to get caught up. Still in need of phone volunteers, with 3.5 regular shifts open. There is a one-year sobriety requirement. Contact Li or Markus at C.O. during office hours

Saturday hours (10am-2pm) at Central Office so far successful with over \$400 in business on the first open Saturday. Please spread the word about the new added hours for Central Office.

## New Business

Position available in COC. Rebecca M. (IGR for Artists and Writers) has made herself available to fill one of the vacancies. In accordance with new bylaws the candidate choice will be confirmed with the entire Intergroup at the next fellowship meeting.

Motion to nominate Rebecca M. to the board of directors (COC) made by Rich G., 2nd, all in favor.

ASL interpreters, Rich H. Has worked in Disabilities and disabled people since 1971. Alarmed during December meeting about financial condition of Central Office. The issue brought up whether we can continue to afford ASL. Reason for presenting this resolution is due to the reported financial health of Central Office as of December.

Rich puts forth the following resolution as a motion:

"Resolved that COC in concert with the Central Office Manager, shall conduct a feasibility study in order to determine whether the current practice of hiring professional ASL signers may be ended by developing a list of ASL qualified sober AA members from the SF and Marin communities, who are able and willing to volunteer their services when desirable, in order to satisfy a request or requests of deaf or hard of hearing persons in AA recoveries."

Vote is called; 9 yes, 24 no. Motion does not carry. No resolution accepted.

## Committee Reports

**Outreach Committee**. Group discussions, input: Kathy H.; CO could make assignments to group to attend non-represented meetings. Also, spread word in groups that committee members need not be Intergroup members. Should be single place for info on what committees do.

Stephanie; Way to make known committee membership open to all. Announcements at group could be made weekly. Gloria E.; Identify meetings without IGRs. Recognize

# Individual Contributions

to Central Office were made through March 15, 2012  
honoring the following members:

## ONGOING MEMORIALS

Jonathan L.

## ANNIVERSARIES

### HIGH NOON:

Patrick K.—2 years, Jessica T.—6 years, Bernd A.—9 years,  
Margo G.—9 years, Joe O'C—9 year, Anonymous—15 years  
Sue L. — 8 Years

**EUREKA VALLEY TOPIC:** Janet S.—14 years

Judy W.—16 yrs

Yvonne D.—25 yrs, Karen C.—25 yrs

Veronica M.—31 yrs

Beverly C.—32 yrs

that groups that don't have IGRs are missing out. Identify why we're here. Phil L.; Groups make their own decisions on terms of office, sobriety requirements, etc. much easier to be an IGR. Need a really clear mission statement, half a page, about Central Office and what the Intergroup provides. Chip G.; Suggest to a sponsee that they represent groups as IGR. Kevin S.; Print list of meetings not represented and each member could take one per month and attend. Make a paragraph to be read to all meetings. If 400 meetings, and each goes to one. Make specific announcements such as open phone shifts, etc. Get names and pass along. Michelle C.; Attraction rather than promotion, ex. sharing about service with H&I. Next meeting there were new people at H&I. Dan B.; Should attend the unrepresented meetings for month or two. Invite people to come as visitors to this group. List of upcoming events published, use this in announcements. Maury P.; Additional concern is getting people to stay. What can we do to keep people who come? Margaret J.; Makes known at meetings involvement with IG, receives questions specific to participation.

### Liaison reports

**SF PI/CPC**, (Public Information/  
Cooperation with the Professional

Community) Rich G.; Rich has recently been elected chair of the committee.

Activity report for last month: Presented at six DUI classes, made one public Information presentation at a school USF, One orientation presentation at Ohloff House, provided a PI table at Homeless Connect at Bill Graham Auditorium.

Elected new group of committee members, still a number of open opportunities to be filled. Ex. Literature coordinator. Need outreach person for clergy, psychologists, professional community and corporations.

**SF H&I Liaison**, Lynn D.; Monthly budget report available, copies at meeting. Trusted Servants Workshop to be held March 25, 2012. 41st annual H&I conference weekend of May 18th in Redding, CA.

**Bridging the Gap**, Cheryl P.; Takes people to first meeting who are just coming out of treatment facilities. Need to disperse information of availability of Bridging the Gap to those who are in need.

**Next Meeting April 4, 2012** at First Unitarian Universalist Church, 1187 Franklin at O'Farrell, San Francisco, CA

## 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

Margaret J. chair@aasf.org

#### VICE CHAIR

Rich G. vicechair@aasf.org

#### TREASURER

Michelle C. treasurer@aasf.org

#### RECORDING SECRETARY

Thayer W. secretary@aasf.org

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

#### CENTRAL OFFICE COMMITTEE

David S. coc@aasf.org

#### 12th STEP COMMITTEE

OPEN 12thstep@aasf.org

#### ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

Michael P. archives@aasf.org

#### ORIENTATION COMMITTEE

Blu F. orientation@aasf.org

#### FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

Michelle A. fellowship@aasf.org

#### THE BUZZ

Li L. thebuzz@aasf.org

#### THE POINT

Charley D. thepoint@aasf.org

#### ACCESS COMMITTEE

Brian C. access@aasf.org

#### TRUSTED SERVANTS WORKSHOP COMMITTEE

Ted R. tsw@aasf.org

#### WEBSITE COMMITTEE

David S. website@aasf.org

#### PI/CPC COMMITTEE

Rich G. picpc@aasf.org

#### SF TELESERVICE COMMITTEE

Seth H. sfteservice@aasf.org

# aa group contributions

Fellowship Contributions	Feb. 12	YTD
Brisbane Breakfast Bunch	\$ 30	\$ 30
Contribution Box	\$ 65	\$ 65
Gratitude in Action		\$ 658
IFB	\$ 86	\$ 202
Serenity House	\$ 150	\$ 150
Spirit of San Francisco		\$ 141
Unidentified Group	\$ 42	\$ 42
<b>Fellowship Total</b>	<b>\$ 373</b>	<b>\$1,288</b>

Marin Contributions	Feb. 12	YTD
10am Big Book W 10am		\$ 275
Awareness/Acceptance M 1030am		\$ 156
Blackie's Pasture Sa 830pm	\$ 250	\$ 250
Closed Women's SS Tu 330pm		\$ 95
Crossroads Sun 12pm		\$1,000
East San Rafael Big Book		\$ 100
High & Dry W 12pm		\$ 129
Intimate Feelings Sa 10am		\$ 168
Living in the Solution F 6pm		\$ 139
Marin City Groups 5D 630pm	\$ 292	\$ 292
Mill Valley 7D 7am		\$ 580
More Will Be Revealed F 12pm		\$ 50
Morning Attitude Adjustment		\$ 125
Nativity Monday Night BB 8pm		\$ 100
Newcomers Step M 730pm	\$ 208	\$ 208
Pathfinders Tu 12pm		\$ 175
Primary Purpose W 830pm		\$ 46
Refugee Th 12pm	\$ 60	\$ 60
San Geronimo Valley M 8pm		\$ 344
Sausalito 12 Step Study Group	\$ 50	\$ 50
Streetfighters Sa 9am		\$ 112
Terra Linda Thursday Stag 8pm		\$ 300
TGIF F 6pm		\$ 158
The Fearless Searchers F 8pm		\$ 396
Thursday Night Miracles Th 830pm	\$ 38	\$ 38
Tiburon Beginners & Closed Tu		\$ 402
Tuesday Chip Meeting Tu 830pm		\$ 350
We, Us and Ours M 650pm		\$ 150
Wednesday Night Candlelight 8pm	\$ 110	\$ 110
Wednesday Night SD W 7pm		\$ 42
What's It All About F 12pm		\$ 60
Women in Unity Th 1230pm	\$ 50	\$ 50
<b>Marin Total</b>	<b>\$1,058</b>	<b>\$6,508</b>

SF Contributions	Feb. 12	YTD
6am Dry Dock Sa	\$ 100	\$ 100
6am Dry Dock Th	\$ 60	\$ 60
7am As Bill Sees It Fri	\$ 104	\$ 104
7am Living Sober W 7am		\$ 247

SF Contributions	Feb. 12	YTD
7am Smokeless Su 7am		\$ 29
7am Speaker Discussion Th 7am		\$218
830am Smokeless F 830am		\$165
830am Smokeless Th 830am	\$ 35	\$ 35
A is for Alcohol Tu 6pm	\$ 77	\$122
Afro American Beginners Sat 8pm		\$126
Amazing Grace M 7pm	\$ 84	\$ 84
Artists & Writers F 630pm	\$ 161	\$161
As Bill CCs It Sun 8am		\$100
As Bill Sees It Th 830pm		\$ 15
Attitude Adjustment 7D 7am		\$494
Bernal Big Book Sat 5pm	\$ 154	\$154
Bernal New Day 7D	\$ 219	\$615
Blue Book Special Su 11am		\$ 68
Brokers Open Book Tu 130pm		\$ 26
Brothers in Arms M 8pm		\$131
Came to Park Sat 7pm		\$120
Castro Discussion Th 8pm	\$ 11	\$ 11
Code Blue Big Book Study W 7pm		\$425
Deer Park Discovery Group		\$ 29
Design for Living Sat 8am		\$385
Diamond Heights Tu 830pm	\$ 180	\$180
Dignitaries Sympathy W 815pm		\$295
Each Day a New Beginning M 7am	\$ 186	\$186
Each Day a New Beginning Th 7am		\$993
Each Day a New Beginning Tu 7am	\$ 339	\$339
Each Day a New Beginning W 7am		\$812
Excelsior "Scent" Free for All Sa 8pm	\$ 60	\$ 60
Extreme Makeover M 730pm		\$ 23
Firefighters & Friends Tu 10am		\$102
Fireside Chat Group Th 8pm	\$ 133	\$177
Fireside Chat Sa 9pm		\$156
Friday All Groups F 830pm	\$ 213	\$458
Friday Night Book F 830pm	\$ 158	\$158
Friday Smokeless F 8pm	\$ 90	\$ 90
Friendly Circle Beginners Su 715pm	\$ 65	\$ 65
Haight Street Blues Tu 615pm		\$475
Happy Destiny Sa 630pm		\$302
Happy Hour Ladies Night F 530pm		\$135
High Noon Friday 230pm	\$ 31	\$ 31
Hilldwellers M 8pm		\$362
How Was Your Week? Sa 10am		\$175
Huntington Square W 630pm		\$221
Join the Tribe Tu 7pm		\$199
Like A Prayer Su 4pm		\$250
Living Proof Th 630pm		\$113
Living Sober W 8pm	\$ 65	\$ 65
Mid-Morning Support Su 1030am		\$292
Mission Fellow. No Reservations		\$ 30

SF Contributions	Feb. 12	YTD
Monday Monday M 1215pm	\$ 60	\$ 60
No Reservation M 12pm		\$ 388
Off Broadway Book Th 730pm		\$ 31
Park Presidio M 830pm	\$ 54	\$ 54
Pax West Th 12pm		\$ 289
Potrero Hill 12 x 12 M 630pm	\$ 211	\$ 211
Queers, Crackpots & Fallen Women		\$ 57
Quitting Time MWF 530pm		\$ 500
Reality Farm Th 830pm	\$ 506	\$ 506
Saturday Afternoon Meditation 5pm	\$ 522	\$ 522
Saturday Easy Does It Sa 12pm		\$ 658
Say Hey Group M, Tu, F 6pm		\$ 153
Seacliff Th 830pm	\$ 75	\$ 75
Serendipity Sa 11am		\$ 137
Serenity House		\$ 150
Sesame Step Tu 730pm	\$ 138	\$ 138
SFPOA Th 7pm		\$ 200
Sinbar Su 8pm		\$ 101
Sober Saturday Sa 830am		\$ 94
Sometimes Slowly Sa 11am		\$ 306
Sought to Improve Th 715pm	\$ 60	\$ 60
Stepping Out Sat 430pm	\$ 90	\$ 90
Sunday Express Sun 6pm		\$ 150
Sunday Night 3rd Step Group 5pm		\$ 81
Sunday Night Castro SD 730pm		\$ 454
Sunset 11'ers Su	\$ 230	\$ 230
Sunset 11'ers Th		\$ 122
Sunset 11'ers Tu		\$ 91
Sunset Speaker Step Sun 730pm	\$ 307	\$ 307
Ten Years After Su 6pm	\$ 378	\$1,867
The Dry Dock Fellowship		\$ 195
The Leaky Cauldron Su 1030am		\$ 183
The Pepper Group F 12pm	\$ 56	\$ 56
There is a Solution Tu 6pm		\$ 373
Thursday Night Book Club Th 7pm		\$ 42
Thursday Thumpers Th 7pm		\$ 100
Trudgers Discussion Su 7pm	\$ 120	\$ 120
Tuesday Downtown Tu 8pm		\$ 27
Tuesday's Daily Reflections Tu 8am	\$ 183	\$ 183
Twelve Steps to Happiness F 730pm	\$ 72	\$ 72
Walk of Shame W 8pm	\$ 88	\$ 88
We Care Tu 12pm		\$ 124
Wednesday Afternoon With Bill	\$ 50	\$ 50
Wharfrats Th 815pm	\$ 95	\$ 200
Women's Promises F 7pm	\$ 97	\$ 538
Work In Progress Sat 7pm	\$ 189	\$ 189
YAHOO Step Sa 1130am		\$ 357
<b>San Francisco Total</b>	<b>\$ 264</b>	<b>\$ 511</b>
<b>YTD</b>	<b>\$1,695</b>	<b>\$8,307</b>





An elderly man, stopped by the police about 2 AM, was asked where he was going at that time of night.

The man replied, "I'm on my way to a lecture about alcohol abuse and the effects it has on the human

body, as well as smoking and staying out late."

The officer, taken by surprise, asked, "Really? Who is giving that lecture at this time of night?"

The man replied, "That would be my wife."

(Continued from page 6)

prepare my A.A. talk in advance, then they read it aloud and I make additional comments. If I'm not able to attend my home group, someone will notice and give me a call to see if I'm okay.

I've learned how to read again, but it's easier for me to listen. One A.A. friend goes over the Big Book,

Alcoholics Anonymous, with me. Another friend has given me a copy of the Big Book on tape. My local central office is building a CD/Tape library of A.A. speakers and I'm looking forward to utilizing it.

I believe in the power of prayer and every day I thank God I'm still alive. I don't want to die; therefore I don't want to drink. My brain injury can also cause me to feel sad or

depressed, but I believe there is magic in maintaining an attitude of gratitude. For instance, I'm grateful to be naturally left handed, because it's my right hand that is now paralyzed. I'm also grateful to have this opportunity to tell my story.

*Reprinted from the pamphlet "A.A. and the Alcoholic with Special Needs," page 22, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.*



(Continued from page 11)

*contact with friends, or through a higher cultivation of the mind beyond the confines of mere rationalism. I see from your letter that Roland H. has chosen the second way, which was, under the circumstances, obviously the best one.*

*I am strongly convinced that the evil principle prevailing in this world leads the unrecognized spiritual need into perdition, if it is not counteracted either by a real religious insight or by the protective wall of human community. An ordinary man, not protected by an*

*action from above and isolated in society cannot resist the power of evil, which is called very aptly the Devil. But the use of such words arouse so many mistakes that one can only keep aloof from them as much as possible.*

*These are the reasons why I could not give a full and sufficient explanation to Roland H. but I am risking it with you, because I conclude from your very decent and honest letter that you have acquired a point of view above the misleading platitudes one usually hears about alcoholism.*

*You see, "alcohol" in Latin is*

*"spiritus," and you use the same word for the highest religious experience as well as for the most depraving poison. The helpful formula therefore is: spiritus contra spiritum.<sup>1</sup>*

*Thank you again for your kind letter.*

*I remain yours sincerely,  
Carl Jung*

<sup>1</sup>A figurative translation of this Latin formula is: "It takes the Spirit of God to overcome the harmful spirit of alcohol."



\$12 for one year

**I would like to subscribe to *The Point***

12 issues!!!

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

**PLEASE MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: The Intercounty Fellowship of A.A.**

# profit and loss statement: January 2012

	Jan 2012	Budget		Jan 2012	Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense			Security System	0	0
Income			Insurance	1697	1678
Group Contributions	22099	18950	Office Supplies	312	51
Individual Contributions	2601	2170	Software Purchased	0	0
Gratitude Month - Groups	2293	2231	Postage	44	38
Sales - Bookstore	11221	11042	Printing	0	0
Cost of Books Sold	-8102	-7554	Paper Purchased	110	0
Total Income	\$30,112	\$26,839	Repair & Maintenance	490	216
Expense			Payroll Expenses	0	0
Employee Expenses	9279	9705	Telephone	424	222
Archives Committee	0	0	Phone Book Listings	91	87
IFB Literature	0	0	Internet Expense	93	123
Access Expenses	840	0	Travel	0	0
Computer Consulting	150	0	Training	49	0
Sunshine Club/12th Step	0	\$0	Equipment Lease	0	0
PI/CPC	44	0	Bad Checks	0	0
IFB Sponsored Events	514	0	Total Expense	\$14,638	\$13,551
Filing Fees	0	36	Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	\$15,475	\$13,288
Rent - Office	3811	3810	Interest Income	94	100
Rent - Other	0	0	Depreciation/Amortization Expense	584	584
			Net Surplus/(Deficit)	\$14,984	\$12,804

## Treasurer's Report

For the month of January 2012, group contributions were \$3,149 over budget. Individual contributions were \$336 over budget. Gratitude month contributions were \$62 over budget. Year-to-date gratitude month contributions were \$760 under budget. Bookstore sales were \$208 over budget in January.

Employee wages and salaries for the month were under budget due to one employee starting mid-January and other employee starting at the beginning of February.

Unrestricted cash balance increased to \$47,190.21 from \$32,123.71, which represents more than two months of average operating expenses.

**OVERALL RATING: EXCELLENT**

## SPEAKERS WANTED!!

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

### PI/ CPC SPEAKER WORKSHOP

(Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community)

Speaker requirement: two years of continuous sobriety in AA. "Old" speakers who haven't attended a training workshop in a year should come for their annual refresher.

**Tuesday, April 17, 2012 at 7pm**

**Central Office, 1821 Sacramento / Van Ness**  
Call for more information or email [picpc@aaaf.org](mailto:picpc@aaaf.org)



**Reasonable Accommodations Policy:** Persons requiring reasonable accommodations, including sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices or print materials in alternate formats should contact Central Office no later than April 10, 2012.



## Plea For Information

The Access Committee of the Intercounty Fellowship is working to increase awareness and solutions for people who experience difficulties in accessing the recovery message of A.A. This may be of a visual, auditory, mobility, literacy or other nature. Our mission is to ensure the inclusion of all those who seek to stop drinking in our fellowship of recovery.

Toward that end we are seeking input from people who encounter barriers to accessing the message of A.A. as presented in traditionally structured meetings and literature. Have you or anyone you know experienced any barriers that we can work to remove? Please contact us at [access@aaaf.org](mailto:access@aaaf.org).

(Continued from page 8)

the quality of my listening. When the noise in my head ceases, I am able to pay attention and be present for others, without getting distracted by my own thoughts and self-obsessions.

"My spiritual practice today is Vipassana meditation, which is a Buddhist practice. For me, one doesn't necessarily get anything out of meditation, but one can leave distractions on the cushion. I usually do a short meditation in the morning. I also try to attend three sitting

groups each week, including one A.A. meditation meeting. I have done longer retreats in my practice, including a number of 10-day silent retreats. Like a roller coaster, the first few days of a longer retreat can bounce you around in your body and your mind. For me, there were times of great physical pains in the body, times of self-doubt, and lots of emotional ups and downs. My practice used to be just me and my breath; but today it is still unfolding. Recently I attended a devotional retreat that included chanting, bowing and other ritual acts.

"Some books that I would recommend if you are curious are Jack Kornfield's *A Path with Heart* and Kevin Griffin's *One Breath at a Time; Buddhism and the Twelve Steps*."\*

\*"There are many helpful books also. Suggestions about these may be obtained from one's priest, minister, or rabbi. Be quick to see where religious people are right. Make use of what they offer." Big Book, 4th Ed., p. 87 – Editor



(Continued from page 7)

biochemical and could be corrected, or helped, by modern pharmacology.

The antidepressant helped. It was not a cure-all, but, along with working the A.A. program to the best of my ability, and working hard in therapy, over the years various antidepressants and combinations of them have helped me get out of bed or off the couch. The prescribed

antidepressants and mood stabilizers have given me a chance to build a bit of a life for myself, and to appreciate the fruits of 24 years of recovery.

I still struggle with depression. I still take antidepressants. They still help, somewhat but not entirely. The disease of depression is difficult because it is invisible: everything looks perfectly fine, everything actually is perfectly okay, but I don't feel quite okay. It is a daily struggle.

Although I have discovered that many people in recovery from alcoholism/addiction are also recovering from depression, depression is a lonely, alienated state. Sticking as close to the fellowship as I can helps. Telling the truth, as I have done here, helps. Thank you for hearing my truth.



# April 2012

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