

the Point

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

from Chapter Five of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous

2012
6
June

A publication of the Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous

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No Easier, Softer Way



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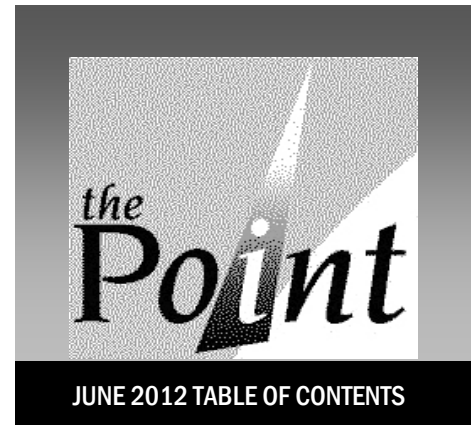
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The Point is published monthly to inform AA members about business and meeting affairs in the Intercounty Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous (San Francisco and Marin Counties). The Point's pages are open to participation by all AA members. Nothing 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.

June 2012

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
<p><i>Persons requiring reasonable accommodations at Intergroup meetings Intergroup committee meetings 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> 			
3	4	5	6 <u>FIRST WED</u> Intergroup Meeting 1187 Franklin Orientation 6pm Meeting 7pm
10	11 <u>SECOND MON</u> SF PI/CPC (Public Information) Cooperation with the Professional Community Committee Central Office 7pm	12 <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	13 <u>SECOND WED</u> Marin Bridging the Gap 1360 Lincoln Ave San Rafael Alano Club 6:30pm
17 <u>THIRD SUN</u> Archives Committee Central Office 2pm Business Meeting followed by Work Day	18 <u>THIRD MON</u> SF Teleservice Central Office 6:30pm Marin General Service 9 Ross Valley Rd San Rafael 8pm	19 <u>THIRD TUE</u> Access Committee Central Office 7pm	20
24	25	26 <u>FOURTH TUE</u> The Point Committee Central Office 5:30pm Marin Teleservice 1360 Lincoln Ave San Rafael Alano Club 7:30pm	27

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 <u>Founders Day Dinner</u> 1187 Franklin St Doors open 6pm Dinner 6:30pm AA Speaker Meeting 7:30pm Coffee, Dessert, Fellowship 8:30pm
7	8	9
14	15	16
21	22	23 <u>FOURTH SAT</u> CNCA Meeting 320 N McDowell Petaluma, CA 12:30pm
28 <u>FOURTH THU</u> SF H&I Old First Church 1751 Sacramento St, SF Orientation 7pm Business Meeting 8pm	29	30 



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“So we clean house ... asking each morning in meditation that our Creator show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.”

Big Book, p. 83



Meeting Changes

New Meetings:

Mon	6:00pm	Nob Hill	TO IMPROVE OUR CONSCIOUS CONTACT, 1100 California St./ Taylor St.
Wed	10:30pm	Sausalito	PASSAGES, Mitchell Rd./Visitor's Center / Rodeo/Cronkhite Beach (see website: carpool info)
Thu	6:30pm	McLaren Park	RIVER OF LIFE A.A., 1430 Sunnydale Ave./Hahn St.
Fri	7:30pm	Hayes Valley	FRIDAY FREETHINKERS, 1748 Market St./Octavia St.
Sat	6:00pm	Mission	IT TAKES A VILLAGE, 2900 25th St./Florida St.
Sat	6:30pm	Marin City	MARIN CITY 6 NIGHTS: SATURDAY, 101 Donahue St./Terners Dr.

Meeting Changes:

Sun/Sat	8:00am	Mill Valley	MILL VALLEY, 60 Tennessee Valley Rd./Shoreline Hwy. (was at 7am)
Mon-Fri	6:30pm	Marin City	MARIN CITY 6 NIGHTS, 101 Donahue St./Terners Dr. (was Marin City—Nights)
Wed	12:00pm	Novato	WORKING DOGS, 5400 Nave Dr./Bolling Dr. (was 12:05pm)
Thu	8:30pm	Mill Valley	THURSDAY NIGHT SPEAKER, 17 Buena Vista Ave./Blithedale Ave. (no more Child Care)
Fri	12:00pm	Castro	LANGUAGE OF THE HEART, 152 Church St./Market (new designation Gay/Lesbian)
Sat	9:30am	Hayes Valley	YOUNG AT HEART, 601-611 Hayes St./Laguna St. (was 602 Hayes St.)

No Longer Meeting:

Mon	6:00pm	San Rafael	CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM, 1360 Lincoln Ave./Maple St.
Tue	6:15pm	Mission	WOMEN WHO DRANK TOO MUCH, 3557 20th St./Lexington St.
Tue	7:30pm	Northern Mission	BEACH 547 SPEAKER-TAPE, 170 Valencia St./Duboce St.
Thu	6:30pm	Financial	STEP SISTERS, 235 Montgomery St./Pine St.
Fri	8:30pm	Corte Madera	HILLSIDE CANDLELIGHT, 5461 Paradise Dr./Verona Pl.

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!**

Founders Day Dinner

Saturday, June 2nd, 2012

Doors open at 6pm, Dinner served at 6:30, Speaker meeting with Greg M., retired General Manager from our General Service Office in NY, at 7:30pm. Coffee, Dessert, Fellowship at 8:30pm.

Door Prizes! Please join us in celebration of 77 years!

First Unitarian Universalist Church
1187 Franklin St.
San Francisco, CA

Suggested Donation: \$5; no one turned away for lack of funds.

From the Editor

No Easier, Softer Way?

by MEM

The rooms of A.A. are filled with those who have sought the easier, softer way. We call ourselves “retreads.” Having arrived out of an abundance of fear and self-loathing, or perhaps a simple directive from a probation officer, we paid very strict attention and quickly got ourselves sober. In my case, I then proclaimed that, just as the sick person recovers after a visit to the emergency room and doesn’t move into the hospital permanently, I did not have to stick with A.A. after my first year of sobriety gave me new footing and principles to guide my life. That glue held me sober for the next five years, but ultimately the cunning old demon convinced me I could indeed drink like normal people. It took another ten years before I could finally abandon the search for that illusive easier way.

Our pages are filled with stories of hope. Victor tells how following the Steps led him to awareness of the prison of his character defects and ultimately led him out of the dark

into a spiritual relationship with God and the reclaiming of his self-esteem. K.E. is able to share about having survived the lure of a Safeway wine shelf by dialing for help as though her life depended on it. Suzan offers a keen look at how childhood experiences of envy and pride contributed to a grown-up cycle of resentments. A voice from the faraway continent of India, now being sponsored by one of our local members thanks to the e-age, reminds us that the disease is universal and taking A.A. for granted will have fatal results.

Check out stories about the service involved in starting a meeting; tips from the Help desk on working with troublesome sponsees; more Pre-A.A. History; learning about the We Care meeting Tuesday noons in the Civic Center; experiences with Step Six and Tradition Six; and even a letter from a reader in Tennessee.

As all of us who keep coming back know, A.A. does work. In fact, most of us believe that, compared with the slow, painful life of suicide by alcohol, this is the easier, softer way. Blessings on us all.



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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Chuck S.	Mary C.	Name
CJ H.	Mary L.	Here!
Dan B.	Maryellen O.	
Dan & Sherry T.	Mia M.	Or
David J.	Michael G.	Here!
David S.	Michael P.	
Denise H.	Michael Z.	Or
Dennis & Lucy O.	Michelle C.	Here!
Dianne E.	Mike M.	
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Erin S.	Nathaniel W.	
Evan K.	Niels R.	
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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!

Defects of Character?

My Self-esteem is based on my relationship with God

by Victor V.

I came into Alcoholics Anonymous to get people off of my back. There were some folks that thought I had a drinking problem. I didn't necessarily agree. Yeah, I drank too much sometimes, but I didn't think it was a problem. If you had the life and relationships I had, you would drink too!

I started to attend meetings at 39 years of age. I listened to members share their experiences, but I continued to drink. My self-will was stronger than my desire to surrender to the help being offered me. Five years later, I couldn't stand who I saw in the mirror. The choice I had to make was to quit looking into mirrors and avoid the problem, as I had done with everything else in my life, or follow the suggestions of the sober members of A.A.

I was told to go to meetings, read the Big Book, get a sponsor, work the steps, and get a service commitment. I went to 90 meetings in 90 days and followed the suggestions. I got a service commitment and a sponsor. We started to work the steps. I could see that I was an alcoholic. The group became my higher power because they had a solution for my drinking.

I learned in the Third Step that my

biggest problem was self will which stood in the way of my usefulness. Next we made a list of my resentments, harms, and fears. I was able to see what my part was, sometimes by myself and other times with the help of my sponsor. I was

Faith without works is dead

selfish, self-seeking, dishonest, inconsiderate, and afraid. I was able to find enough humility to be able to share with my sponsor all of my life story, the good and the bad. I realized that I was spiritually sick and that only I was responsible for my behavior. I would have to have a full understanding of what my defects were in relation to God.

My higher power (the group), gave me hope, and that brought me to a place where I now have faith in God. The action of A.A. brought me to a place where I could recognize God. "Faith without works is dead," so I hear! The seven deadly sins were a good starting place for me. I heard a member at a meeting make up a word to help her remember the seven deadly sins, "PAGGLES": Pride, Anger, Greed, Gluttony, Lust, Envy, and Sloth. I could not see how these defects dominated my life. They were disguised in my self-will. Was I

always humble? Was I loving and kind? Was I giving? Did I always take just what I needed? Was I happy with what I had? Did I want more? Was I always willing to take action? The answer to these questions was clearly "no"! Surprise, surprise, I had some defects of character that I was going to have to be willing to deal with if I was to experience some peace and serenity. I have learned that my self-esteem is based on my relationship with God.

The more I am practicing the principles of the program, which come from the steps, the better I feel about myself. Step Six is still part of my everyday action nine years after putting down the drink. A.A. teaches me that I will continue trudging the road to a happy destiny. I have to surrender my will to a God of my understanding and continue making right the wrongs that I create daily. Dr. Paul O., who wrote the story "Acceptance is the Answer" in the Big Book, writes in another book this quote: "the circumstances of my life do not determine the quality of my life, the quality of my life is determined by my reaction to those circumstances." Thank you Alcoholics Anonymous for giving me a life beyond my wildest dreams! I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world. Action and more action!



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

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



THE EASIER, SOFTER WAY

An A.A. Member Makes Use of the "Gift of Desperation"

by K.E.

When I arrived in the rooms of A.A., all I knew was that drinking was going to kill me, and if I wanted to remain alive, I could no longer do it. I knew nothing about how to stop, or more importantly, how to stay stopped. I also carried with me my stubborn alcoholic head, which distrusted any course of action prescribed for me that differed from one I had already prescribed for myself.

The greatest gift I carried with me when first arrived was desperation. It was only desperation that allowed me to listen to people who told me to get a sponsor, begin working the steps, and go to a meeting every day. I did these things, and a couple of months went by. The good friend who had coaxed me into the rooms cheered me on as I picked up my 60 day chip, then my 90 day chip. By then I was on Step Three, which I recited by rote without any understanding whatsoever of what it truly means to surrender.

This was when the progress slowed a bit, and my stubborn head made an appearance. By now I had lost the sharp edge of my desperation. I'd detoxed, made it through several alcohol-laden work events without a slip, and no longer felt that at any moment I might break down and crawl into a bar on my hands and knees. Suddenly my sponsor didn't look so smart. As she outlined the

columns in the Fourth Step on a piece of graph paper, I thought about all the years I'd spent in therapy and decided that there was nothing new I was going to learn by doing this little exercise—especially the part where I read it to her she offered her not-so-smart insights on my character defects. I decided the Fourth Step could keep for a while. I would continue going to meetings and hanging out with my new A.A. friends; it had worked so far, right?

A few months went by. People told me stories about A.A.s going out over Fourth Step procrastination, but I just smiled. Not everyone had the same degree of alcoholism, I reasoned, therefore the A.A. program was customizable: you could take the parts you needed and leave the others behind.

The easier, softer way was in fact the much more difficult, painful way.

While all of this was going on I was busy dabbling in the kind of relationship that A.A. literature and collective wisdom strongly advise the newcomer against.

Coming back from a meeting one Sunday evening, I made a stop in Safeway to pick up milk and eggs for the coming week. I felt isolated, and unable to relate to what the people in the meeting had shared. I was angry with the guy I was seeing, who was not behaving the way I wanted him

to. I was afraid of going to work the next morning. For the first time in months, I decided to walk down the wine aisle in the grocery store. I remember feeling as if the bottles were animate creatures capable of flying off the shelves into my hands. It would be so quick, I thought. No one would know. A short trip through the line, and I would be in my car with a bottle of Harvest Moon zinfandel, opening the glove compartment where I always kept an extra corkscrew "just in case" I needed it.

I dropped the milk I was carrying on the floor, picked up my phone, and called the first A.A. phone number I could find. "I'm going to drink any minute now," I said to the person who answered. I had called Jesse, another newcomer who had gotten

sober a month before me. "Stay on the phone with me until I'm safe at

home," I pleaded, and he did just that.

The next day I sat down with my graph paper and began scrawling out my Fourth Step. The gift of desperation had returned to me, and with it the realization that what I thought was the easier, softer way was in fact the much more difficult, painful way. The effort of cranking through my Fourth Step was nothing compared to what I would face if I tried to skip it.



God is Subtle

by *Shrini G.*

“Enjoy your stay in San Francisco, the immigration officer said, stamping my virgin passport. It was 2007. I was 33 years old, just over 3 years sober.

Previously, I had only fantasized about traveling, while sitting in dark, unkempt bars around my town in Southern India. The stench was overpowering. Bouncers were merciless. That was my world, drinking morning and night.

When my alcoholic father died when I was 15, I felt liberated from an endless cycle of violence at home. I drank my first glass of beer soon after and kick-started the process of banishing myself to hell. Thirteen years later, I was sitting at home, shivering all over. The drunk the night before had been bad. I wanted a quick death but I also wanted to drink more. I remember thinking of drinking *arrack* (an illicit local moonshine that often turns fatally toxic) because that's what I could afford (if I could find a job). Maybe someone could sponsor me a few notes a day for my arrack. After all I was going to drink and die. Wasn't I?

A family member pointed me toward A.A.. I was desperate to try anything so I went alone to a meeting. No lightening or singing angels. Just a small room with a dozen men talking about their drinking history. How would this help me? I wish I could say I stayed sober from day one. I drank for a couple more months but kept going to A.A.. Suddenly it happened: the obsession was lifted and I was not drinking. Months, then years, went by. I felt the presence of God, acting through A.A..

Gradually, meetings lost their priority. I had no sponsor. The steps

had become optional. My career was blooming, I was travelling frequently, I had married and had a beautiful girl child. There was a wonderful affair on the side as well.

As my spiritual condition deteriorated, I sought out a prescription drug for 'acute emotional stress'. Alcoholic anonymous is all about alcohol right? Nothing wrong in taking something for the nerves, although it was an opiate.

Out came the bottle one night. I found myself in the same stench-filled seedy bar at 6 am next morning buying booze on the side before the official hours started. I don't remember much of that day. I was in a blackout.

The next morning I woke up shaking. Baffled and terrified, I called up an old timer and confessed. His essential message was to "go to meetings". The next one too said that. So I went to one meeting after another. I was sweating, my thoughts were racing and I wanted to be invisible. I did not feel worthy being in the halls of A.A. again after what I had done.

But there was nothing but kindness at the meetings and from the online forum I had joined. Among these people I would probably never meet, I chose a sponsor.

Tom M was God-send to me. He was kind, loving, gently firm and humble. I surrendered to his wisdom. I did what he said because he wouldn't negotiate. (I tried).

I really blossomed under Tom. Now I understood A.A.. It was about the 12 steps. The meetings were important, but not sufficient alone. The book says, “Rarely have we seen a person

fail who has thoroughly followed our path”. The path is 12 steps. I have scant chance of staying sober without them. Everything was different once my sponsor led me through them.

Right after I took my 2nd step, I took my 5 year old daughter to a clinical psychologist. This professional immediately saw that I was the problem. I discussed it with Tom and started therapy. Soon I was diagnosed with borderline personality disorder and obsessive compulsive disorder and referred to a psychiatrist.

I spoke to Tom again. Not one to look down his nose on medicine and psychiatry, he encouraged me to take all the help. He told me my higher power acts through people.

I do believe now that it was my higher power who restored me to sanity through all these means, right after I took my second step.

I had never met Tom or even spoken to him on phone. All our conversations were through emails and it opened up a fresh dimension of honesty to me. I simply could not bring myself to lie to him or wash off something. Somehow I knew he would know anyway.

Soon, having completed my fourth, I went to a local priest for the fifth. I had some relief but I felt dazed. I did not sense that I was walking with my higher power on the broad highway as the book describes. I asked Tom if I had done it wrong. Tom, I am sure, chuckled but told me that lightning or rolling thunder were for the movies and in real life God did not work that way. God is subtle.

True enough, there had been changes for good in me. First others noticed,

(Continued on page 9)



YEAR OF THE TWELVE

Step Six: Compare and Despair, Contrast and Lambast A.A., An Antidote to Envy

by Suzan C.

One of my most painful character defects was a tendency to compare myself to others. I was frequently tormented by envy or puffed up by pride. My Fourth Step showed me how this defect had sabotaged personal and work relationships. In my Fifth Step I admitted to God and my sponsor that I had been a back stabber, an assassin of character, a person who would to any length to topple her competition. At Step Six, I just assumed I was willing to have this evil trait removed.

From my first A.A. meeting, I noticed how so many alcoholics had the same odd quirks as mine. We had all been raised by the same wolves. When I first heard “ego maniacs with an inferiority complex” I identified instantly. During my Fourth Step, I recognized patterns of behavior established in early childhood. I resented my parents for comparing me to other children – “why can’t you be like Gwendolyn? She’s such a nice girl.” They would ask my younger sister why she could not be more like me (even though I had not earned the admiration bestowed upon Gwendolyn). In contrast to my negative ranking at home, my

schoolteachers would often heap praise on me, that my second grade poem was so profound, that my history essay should be read aloud to the class. So early on, I was taught to measure myself in comparison to my peers, favorably or not. This set in motion a lifetime of alternating inflation and deflation.

Envy is one of the most toxic human emotions. It is visceral. The fists clench, the heart races, the teeth grind. The resentment that envy engenders is deeper than most other kinds. We want the other person to fail, to be exposed, to be ridiculed, and sometimes, we want him to die. Before I came to A.A., the closest thing I had to a moral creed was a poem called “Desiderata.” I kept it hidden in a desk drawer. It said “If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.” I understood what I was reading, and it sounded good, I could not seem to translate it into action. I felt compelled to put each person in the “greater” or “lesser” basket. Avoiding comparisons by categorizing instead did not seem to help.

Nor did the rest of society offer me solutions to envy and pride.

Conventional wisdom often consisted of even more comparison: “yes, Joe did get the promotion and you didn’t, but think about how much better you know this project than he does and what a better speaker you are.” This approach yielded nothing. Finally, when I came to A.A., I heard an original thought on the problem that had plagued me since childhood. I learned that I cannot compare my insides to someone else’s outsides. To become willing to let go of comparing myself to others, I had to realize that I was not just giving up the ugly consequences of crippling envy. I was giving up my only sense of where I stood in the world. I did not know how to look at myself if I did not have someone else to use as a benchmark. After working the program a good long while, I began to see that it was okay to emulate positive behavior and learn from others’ mistakes. Emphasis placed on conduct was constructive and emphasis placed on particular individuals was not. In other words, “principles before personalities.” If only A.A. could be taught in kindergarten.



(Continued from page 8)

then I started noticing. My life was getting better. I was more at peace with myself and I was feeling God’s presence. I was seeing God’s hands in many things. I was feeling gratitude almost everyday.

In the meantime, Tom had been

suffering with illness and age. He is a tough guy but when he lovingly asked me to look for another sponsor I obeyed him. I just got my new sponsor about a couple weeks ago. Again an e-sponsor who is in San Francisco. She is a no-nonsense lady who has adopted me as her little brother.

Tom M remains a true friend and mentor. I now have 21 months of sobriety one-day-at-a time. My life is more satisfying now. I look forward to the future with pleasant expectation and eagerness. I feel part of my family and part of A.A.. God showed me Tom and Tom brought God to me through our program.



Survey of Service

How to Make a Meeting, with Melanie L.

by MEM

In the February 2012 issue of *The Point*, I wrote about my home group, *Queers, Crackpots & Fallen Women*. While gathering information for that article, I learned that its founder, Melanie L., had long harbored the desire to start a meeting with that name, taken from the Third Tradition. Her involvement with the formation of the Alano Club led her to finally find the time and place to begin the meeting. She has remained a regular attendee and supporter of this Steps and Traditions group since 2006. She appreciates the fact it is a smaller intimate group, where no one can put on airs and no one can hide in a crowd, as we can tend to do. I recently met with Melanie to learn more about her service work and learned she is something of a Johnny Appleseed when it comes to starting meetings.

Recently, Melanie had announced that she has formed another group – *Young At Heart* – which meets at 9:30 AM on Saturday mornings at the Age Song Center at Laguna and Hayes in San Francisco. While answering phones on her shift at Central Office, she took a call from the senior center asking that a meeting be established there for some of its residents who were unable to leave the facility for a meeting. After checking it out with the folks at Central Office, Melanie then met with some of the staff and residents at Age Song before deciding to proceed. The first meeting was held on March 3, with at least two long-time A.A.s and another who is a recurring newcomer in attendance.

I had answered an earlier call for support from Melanie in 2008 when she formed the Say Hey Group at the request of another senior residence (Mercy Housing) just a stone's throw from the ballpark. Melanie is a lifelong Giants' fan and being able to

She is something of a Johnny Appleseed when it comes to starting meetings

name the group was frosting on the cake of the service she could offer by helping these residents establish an in-house meeting. A single Tuesday night meeting grew into a regular 5 days a week (Monday through Friday) series, including a meditation meeting, 12&12, Big Book and speaker meetings focusing on newcomers. The growth of this series of meetings came partly because of the dearth of meetings in the newly thriving Mission Bay district, and partly due to the efforts of Kurt, who joined early, helped with a webpage, and tirelessly supported that first group. Due to the passing of some of the senior residents and a need by the facility to reclaim the meeting room, these Mission Bay meetings are now held in the Ukrainian church on 7th Street near Folsom.

It takes about a year to “grow” a meeting and get it stabilized to stand on its own. There are many nights when only one or two people show up. Melanie recalled the now defunct *Rebels & Rejects* Step meeting, which she didn't form but tried to save. Originally a thriving meeting for the “tattoo crowd,”

attendance had dropped by the time Melanie had become secretary. As often happens, attendance finally dwindled to a predictable party of two, and the meeting eventually closed.

Another call to form a meeting came at one of the Nu Outlook series of speaker meetings held above the Ariana Cafe (Geary at Larkin). The call for a Big Book

meeting was answered by Melanie, which led to her formation of the Big Book with Bill meeting Tuesday mornings at 10:30. This meeting took root and Melanie has become a regular attendee (it forces her out of bed on Thursdays, when she has no other commitments). She also renamed the meeting “Big Book with Bob” to honor the often overlooked co-founder of A.A.

Sobriety helped Melanie overcome her shyness (hard to believe if you know her now!) and fear of rejection to form a book club, one of those dreams a practicing alcoholic can rarely fulfill. Not an official A.A. meeting, a half dozen friends in the program have been meeting in Melanie's living room every Saturday morning for the past four years, reading literature along spiritual lines. They are currently reading *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* and exploring its spiritual suggestions.

I left my meeting with Melanie with a heart full of love and gratitude. Her involvement in our program is a huge

(Continued on page 12)

PRE A.A. HISTORY BOOK: BILL W's "SPONSOR" FINDS SOBRIETY IN THE OXFORD GROUP

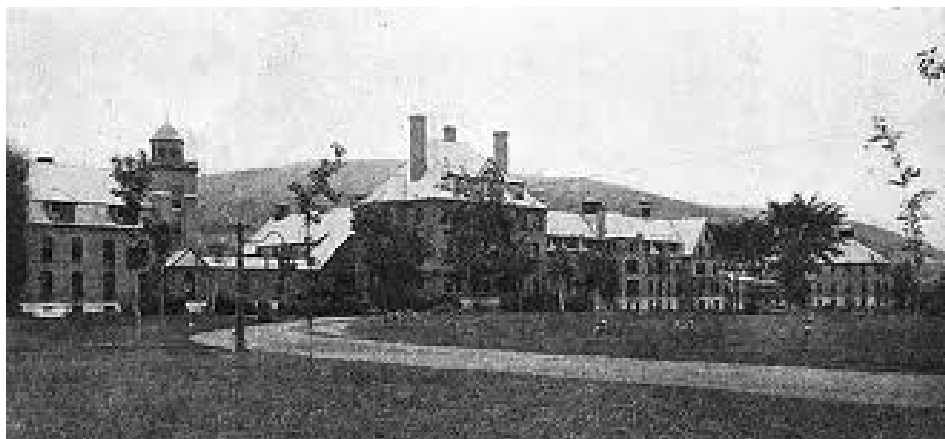
Third Installment of the A.A. Pre-History excerpts from a booklet by Bob S.

In this installment, the story continues with its focus on Edwin (Ebby) Throckmorton's state of drunkenness and depression. Cebra Graves and Shep Cornell pay a visit to Ebby, and they explain to principles of the Oxford Group to him.

Ebby remained in a state of reoccurring drunkenness and depression during the summer of 1934, although he was residing in his family's beautiful summer Manchester home in one of the finest resort areas in the country. As his sadness loomed that July afternoon, one time Broadway actor and current State Senator, Cebra Graves, happened by Rowland Hazard's home near Arlington, just a few miles south, where several happy Oxford Groupers were making use of the swimming pool. When the conversation turned to missionary work, Cebra remembered his old golf acquaintance, Ebby, and invited Sheppard Cornell to come along; Rowland opted to stay by the pool.

Ebby was sitting with his head in his hands; his suit was a bit dirty. "Having a good time Ebby?" was returned by a few angry words. "You don't have to live like this," quipped, Cebra. They cleaned his suit and got him to eat, then they spoke about the principles of the Oxford Group. Although, Ebby was not ready to quit drinking, Cebra found a professional painter to help him finish the house-painting project.

The pigeon shooting incident took probably place in Late August or in



Brattleboro Asylum

September. Resultantly, Ebby was escorted to the Bennington Courthouse where he faced a possible six months confinement in Brattleboro Asylum. Luckily, Cebra's father was the judge and Rowland Hazard offered to take Ebby under his wing via the Oxford Group program of recovery. The judge agreed that if Ebby came back to court Monday morning sober, he would be off the hook!



Ballantine's Ale

It was Saturday and Ebby felt the shakes coming on strongly. He remembered that there were four bottles of Ballantine's Ale cooling down in the cellar. "Go ahead!" he thought, "My God, you are shaking

*If not for Ebby
Thacher's sense of
honesty at that
moment, we wouldn't
have A.A. today!*

apart!" He picked them up . . . He later stated, "Well, I just couldn't do it. It wouldn't be playing the game square the way I looked at it." Luckily for all of us, he took those tempting four bottles of ale three doors down the street and gave them to a neighbor. If not for Ebby Thacher's sense of honesty at that moment, we wouldn't have A.A. today!

Next month, "Ebby's Miraculous Release"





Dear Help,

I have a question about whether I should keep my sponsee. He has long-term sobriety, but has not worked the steps in many years. It seems as if he only wants to check in with me and “dump” details about what is going on his life. When I see areas in which he could be taking action and working a step, such as an inventory, he claims that he's already doing it with the telephone call and doesn't need to write anything down. We've been doing this for over one year now, and I feel that I cannot help this guy. I hear the same issues over and over, and they don't change because he doesn't do the work. His refusal extends to when I suggest that he try to do some Twelfth Step work. He claims that he's doing it by just showing up at meetings in spite of his medical challenges. My own sponsor has a “don't fire a sponsee” policy. I, however, don't feel the same way. Is it time for me to say, “I'd like to work with you as your sponsor, but I need you to work the steps and the program. If you can't do this, then I cannot work with you anymore”?

Sincerely,

Frustrated in S.F.

Dear Frustrated,

It seems you have a very lonely sponsee who, as you point out, simply wants someone to air his grievances to, but is not really interested in making any changes in his approach to life. There is, for me, a big difference between “sobriety” and “recovery.” Sobriety meant simply not drinking, recovery meant learning who I was, how I created many of my problems and, gradually, through the steps and by the example of my own sponsor, how to change my responses to become a happier, healthier person. Sobriety for me also meant going to Al-Anon, which improved my own A.A. program considerably.

I am surprised by your sponsor's policy of “don't fire a sponsee.” There have been several sponsees I have had to “fire” through the years simply because they kept doing the same things over and over again expecting different results. Some of them I cared a great deal about and would have preferred to keep sponsoring,

but it was clear they weren't able to hear “the message” from me. By letting them go, I felt I gave them the opportunity to work with someone else, as well as freeing my time to be available for someone who can better hear my suggestions on how to work the steps. Besides, it got really, really boring hearing the same complaints over and over again with no hope of change.

This is an issue that is specifically addressed in the first paragraph of p. 96 in the Big Book. Remember, we carry the message, not the alcoholic. I think, indeed, it is time for you to say, “I would like to work with you as your sponsor, but I need you to work the steps and the program. If you can't do this, then I cannot work with you anymore.” Try not to become deflected by any arguments he may present. Set your boundary and just keep returning to it. My first sponsor (of 19 years) taught me the wonderful word “nevertheless” and then simply to keep restating what my requirements were to continue to work with me. It has never been easy, but I have been able to do it.

e-Volunteer

(Continued from page 10)

brick in the wall of the new foundation upon which we all strive to rebuild our lives. Thank heavens above that Melanie is sober and no

longer afraid to leave her house. She ventures forth to answer the call to service whenever it reaches her ears, making the hand of A.A. available to all who reach out for help. This is one fallen woman who is no crackpot (her

protests to the contrary notwithstanding), and I am blessed to know her and bear witness to the goddess at work through her.



Meet THE MEETING

The noon siren sounds over Civic Center on a Tuesday as members of the We Care Group of Alcoholics Anonymous observe a moment of silence and then say the Serenity Prayer. There are a few latecomers, carrying take-out containers or brown paper bags, who find seats at the tables in the dining room of the Eastern Park Apartments, where the group meets. The room is attractive and inviting, with carpeted floors and comfortable chairs at tables. It is an easy place to sit down, relax, have a bite of lunch or a cup of coffee and a cookie and share the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. The group lives up to its name – “We Care,” giving newcomers an enthusiastic welcome and encouraging relapsers to keep coming back.

We Care first met in the 1980’s in the Federal Building and courthouse, in one of the conference rooms on the second floor. That’s when I started going, at a time in my sobriety when I needed more meetings. A noon meeting seemed to fill the bill and I didn’t have much of an excuse for

Greetings,

My name is Steve H. from Central Group of A.A. in Johnson City, Tennessee. I just read through one of your newsletters online and really enjoyed reading it. I was wondering if you have a mailing list of people you send them to each month. If so, I would really appreciate being put on that list. You are all doing a great job on that. May God bless and keep you.

Steve

We Care

not going, when my office was in the same building as the meeting and I could take an elevator to get there! Conrad G. and Jim K. were regulars in those early days. Conrad passed away a couple of years ago, but Jim K. is still sober and still at the meeting, as his busy schedule permits.

The federal building conference rooms were remodeled in the 1990’s, and our meeting had to find new space. With much trepidation and complaining we moved to the Eastern Park Apartments, at 711 Eddy Street between Polk and Van Ness. It has turned out to be a very comfortable environment. Plus it’s convenient for everyone from the office workers a few blocks away to the clients of the Community Justice Center around the corner.

The meeting follows the standard speaker-discussion format. The speaker shares experience, strength, and hope, and then the members join in discussion. It’s a colorful crowd – people who would not normally mix – residents of the Tenderloin mingle

with workers from city, state, and federal government offices and private businesses in the neighborhood. Some in the group started out living in piss-in-the-sink hotels when they were drinking, got sober in A.A., and then went to work in the offices. We Care is a refuge – from the stress of survival and of work. As Kris W., a longtime member says: “Most of the people at my office don’t know where I go at noon, but they have noticed I’m easier to deal with when I come back, so they’ve made it clear that I should keep going wherever it is I go!”

The We Care Group meets at 12 Noon Tuesdays at 711 Eddy Street, between Polk Street and Van Ness Avenue, in the dining room on the first floor of the Eastern Park Apartments. There is street parking at meters, and the meeting location is served by Muni bus lines 19, 31, 38, 47, and 49. See you there!



Letters to the Editor

The Point replied –

Hi Steve:

I’m the secretary of The Point editorial committee, responding to your kind email of March 5. We don’t currently have an e-subscription program in place but, as you already know, you can view the newsletter on-line at our website. If you would like a paper subscription, it’s a mere \$12 a year and the info is at the



bottom of page 7 in the March issue.

Thanks again for your support.

Kind regards,

Mike M.

Intergroup meeting summary – May 2012

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

Artists & Writers	Cow Hollow Men's Group	High Noon	Newcomers	Ten Years After
Blue Book Special	Design for Living	Intercounty Fellowship	Noon Smokeless	Thursday Thumpers
Came to Believe	Each Day A New Beginning (M-F)	Join The Tribe	Saturday Beginners	Tiburon Haven Group
Castro Discussion	First Place	Living with HIV	Say Hey Group	Tuesday Beginners
Code Blue	Friendly Circle	Marin Stag	Step Talk	Walk of Shame
Come 'n Get It!	Girl's Night Out	Marina Discussion	Sunset Speaker Step	Wits End

This is an unofficial summary of the May 2012 Intergroup meeting 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 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 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, May 2, 2012 at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, 101 Donohue St., Marin City, CA.

Announcements: see also <http://aasf.org/ifbinfo.cfm>, Rebecca M.

Archives Committee – Preserves the legacy, 3rd Sunday meeting 2-4pm.

Teleservice, open positions available, orientation May 21st.

The Point – Looking for members for writing, editing, etc.

PI/CPC Monday, May 14 7PM; Next Speaker workshop 10:00 AM Saturday, July 14th at Central Office.

Web Committee – Redesigning web site. Access Committee Change, Carlin; Access Committee, new time Tuesday to Third Tuesday of the month, 7pm Upcoming Elections, June, 2012. Next Month will be electing a new board.

Treasurer's Report, Michelle C.: On target with revenue with exception of individual contributions. Groups were close, Bookstore sales a bit less. March was first month Bookstore open on Saturdays. One variance was delay in scheduled deposit of employee deferred compensation, budgeted for March.

Central Office Committee: Finalized performance review for CO Manager Maury. Organization for upcoming board elections. Revisions to employee handbook continues to be outstanding issue.

New Business

Open positions under new board. All current members eligible to run again. Three open positions not counting existing members standing for reelection.

Question, Colin; Nominating committee. Interviews candidates, then what? Makes recommendation.

Q. What is time commitment? One Board meeting per month, (4th Mondays) and the monthly Intergroup meeting and any events sponsored by IFAA. Anything about anonymity at board level? Dan- yes as a non-profit, filing with IRS 990 all members of board of directors are listed by name as public record. This was main reason for changing by-laws to list only the smaller group as board, rather than previous filing with full (former IFB) membership as board. Roll call for members to indicate availability for board positions.

Founders Day Committee, Blu F.: Looking for volunteers for setup, break down, greeters, hospitality. If you or your group would be available to volunteer contact: fellowship@aasf.org. Great food and desserts, a great speaker. To be held at First Unitarian at Franklin and Geary.

Communication to fellowship about deaths within the membership, Bruce K.; Last month there were two members who passed though there was no organized way to communicate to members. Michael, could be included in The Buzz, every two weeks. Not proposing solution but whether we should pursue. David, considering time lag of published media, perhaps email network. David S., Moves that issue be referred to Website Committee for deliberation. Seconded by Bruce K.

Outreach Committee, Phil L.: Outreach coordinator; Consider that Intergroup at large should be doing outreach. Need clear and accurate trusted servant registration. Of the 700-750 meetings in SF and Marin there are about 250 meetings that we haven't heard from for at least one year. Michael P.; Mainly want to know if meeting still exists. Next level would be trusted servants, then whether available for Intergroup representation.

Liaison Reports

Marin GS Liaison, Dan B.: Discussed pre-conference assembly, group conscience delivered to delegate to take to NY.

H&I, Mike B.: Meets Thursday last of month, 7 orientation, 8 business meeting. Started new meeting 850 Bryant starting in July. Openings, quite a few. See Mike.

Spirit of San Francisco, Rick P.: Meets 1st Monday of Month, 777 Brotherhood, 7:00. Need help, eight open seats. Convention October 6th, working on speakers. May 12 having Sadie Hawkins dance, speaker, Meeting 6:30, dance follows. Forrest Hill Lodge, near Forrest Hill Station. See website: www.Spirit-SF.org

PI/CPC, Rich G.: Held a workshop of

Honorary Contributions

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

Dan B.— 17 years
Ann W.— 27 years
Nancy R.—31 years

which 12 people attended, now more speakers in pipeline. Currently not filling all requests for speakers at DUI classes, schools, etc. Wednesday May 9th at Bill Graham Auditorium

Thank you to ICYYPAA for 7th Tradition contribution to Central Office from convention last year.

Meet the Meeting

Mill Valley Beginner's Group, Joe Y. Tuesday at 7:00. Started by Dick F and Charley the printer. Bob G. first secretary about 35 years ago. Started at 45 minutes, an Ask It basket for new comers. Now one hour. Childcare available. At least 100 people a week.

Say Hey, Paul K.; Started Three years ago, south of Market in a retirement home. Later switched to new location. Ukranian Church at 7th and Folsom. 6-7 PM every night of the week. Tuesday speaker, other formats. Wednesday is meditation. Friday is Big Book.

Design for Living, Mike B.; Big Book

Study Saturday Morning 8:00 – 9:15. Co-chairs, one man and one woman. 152 Church at St. Francis Lutheran Church, (Lady of Safeway) Held daily.

Living with HIV group, Simon W.; Wednesday, 6PM at St. Francis Lutheran Church. Discussion started for people diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. All are welcome.

Castro Discussion, Aaron D.; Thursday PM, (Show of Shows) History, high on dramatic flare, light on facts. One of oldest meetings in Castro. Very tightknit group, at a time when gay meetings weren't identified. 50-60 people a week. Tears guaranteed. Great energy. Represents what the Castro is about. Come visit!

Next month's Meet the Meeting: Friendly Circle, Weekend Warriors., Come and Get It, Reality Farm

Next meeting to be Wednesday, 7:00 PM June 6, 2012 at Held at First Unitarian Universalist Church, 1187 Franklin at O'Farrell, San Francisco, CA.

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.

Saturday, July 14, 2012 at 10am

Central Office, 1821 Sacramento / Van Ness
Call for more information or email picpc@aasf.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 July 9, 2012.

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

The following is a list of names and email addresses for our Intergroup Officers and many of the 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

Blu F. fellowship@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. sfteleservice@aasf.org

aa group contributions

Fellowship Contributions	Apr. 12	YTD
Brisbane Breakfast Bunch	\$ 26	\$ 82
Contribution Box	\$ 36	\$ 127
Deer Park Discovery Group	\$ 29	
Gratitude in Action	\$ 658	
ICYPAA	\$ 417	\$ 417
IFB	\$ 92	\$ 414
Spirit of San Francisco	\$ 141	
TSWC	\$ 25	\$ 25
Unidentified Group	\$ 42	
Fellowship Total	\$ 595	\$1,934

Marin Contributions	Apr. 12	YTD
Attitude Adjustment 7D 7am	\$ 404	\$ 635
Awareness/Acceptance M 1030am	\$ 156	
Blackie's Pasture Sa 830pm	\$ 250	
Closed Women's SS Tu 330pm	\$ 102	\$ 197
Crossroads Sun 12pm	\$1,000	
East San Rafael Big Book	\$ 100	
Girls Night Out W 815pm	\$ 47	
Gratitude Tu 8pm	\$ 42	\$ 42
High & Dry W 12pm	\$ 129	
Intimate Feelings Sa 10am	\$ 168	
Living in the Solution F 6pm	\$ 139	
Marin City Groups 5D 630pm	\$ 292	
Marin Stag 8pm	\$ 487	
Mill Valley 7D 7am	\$ 580	
Mill Valley Discussion W 830pm	\$ 121	\$ 121
Monday Night Stag - 12 & 12 6pm	\$ 150	\$ 150
More Will Be Revealed F 12pm	\$ 50	
Morning Attitude Adjustment	\$ 125	
Nativity Monday Night BB M 8pm	\$ 100	
Newcomers Step M 730pm	\$ 208	
On Awakening 7D 530am	\$ 722	
Pathfinders Tu 12pm	\$ 175	
Primary Purpose W 830pm	\$ 46	
Refugee Th 12pm	\$ 60	
Reveille 7D 7am	\$ 200	
San Geronimo Valley M 8pm	\$ 182	\$ 526
Saturday Night Sa 8pm	\$ 79	
Sausalito 12 Step Study Group	\$ 50	
Steps To The Solution W 715pm	\$ 100	
Streetfighters Sa 9am	\$ 112	
Sunday Express Sun 6pm	\$ 150	
Terra Linda Thursday Stag Th 8pm	\$ 300	
TGIF F 6pm	\$ 158	
The Fearless Searchers F 8pm	\$ 396	

Marin Contributions	Apr. 12	YTD
Thursday Night Miracles Th 830pm	\$ 38	
Tiburon Beginners & Closed Tu	\$ 1,188	
Tuesday Chip Meeting Tu 830pm	\$ 350	\$ 700
We, Us and Ours M 650pm	\$ 150	
Wednesday Night Candlelight W 8pm	\$ 110	
Wednesday Night Speaker Disc 7pm	\$ 42	
What's It All About F 12pm	\$ 60	
Women in Unity Th 1230pm	\$ 50	
Women's Big Book Tu 1030am	\$ 210	
Working Dogs W 12pm	\$ 250	\$ 250
Marin Total	\$1,602	\$10,846

SF Contributions	Apr. 12	YTD
6am Dry Dock Sa	\$ 100	\$ 200
6am Dry Dock Th	\$ 60	
7am As Bill Sees It Fri	\$ 104	
7am Living Sober W 7am	\$ 247	
7am Smokeless Su 7am	\$ 29	
7am Speaker Discussion Th 7am	\$ 218	
7am Step Discussion Tu 7am	\$ 71	\$ 71
830am Smokeless F 830am	\$ 165	
830am Smokeless Th 830am	\$ 191	
10am Big Book W 10am	\$ 275	
A is for Alcohol Tu 6pm	\$ 24	\$ 164
Afro American Beginners Sat 8pm	\$ 126	
After Work M 6PM	\$ 137	\$ 137
Agnostics & Freethinkers Su 630pm	\$ 91	
Amazing Grace M 7pm	\$ 84	
Any Lengths Sat 930am	\$ 475	
Artists & Writers F 630pm	\$ 161	
As Bill CCs It Sun 8am	\$ 100	
As Bill Sees It Th 830pm	\$ 15	
As Bill Sees It Tu 1210pm	\$ 180	\$ 180
Ass in a Bag Th 830pm	\$ 439	\$ 439
Atheists, Agnostics & Others Sa	\$ 15	\$ 15
Attitude Adjustment 7D 7am	\$ 494	
Bayview AA Th 7pm	\$ 60	\$ 60
Be Still AA Su 12pm	\$ 138	
Bernal Big Book Sat 5pm	\$ 180	\$ 334
Bernal New Day 7D	\$ 59	\$ 924
Big Book Basics F 8pm	\$ 174	\$ 174
Big Book Study Su 1130am	\$ 210	
Blue Book Special Su 11am	\$ 68	
Brokers Open Book Tu 130pm	\$ 26	
Brothers in Arms M 8pm	\$ 131	
Buena Vista Breakfast Su 12pm	\$ 171	

SF Contributions	Apr. 12	YTD
Came to Park Sat 7pm	\$ 120	
Castro Discussion Th 8pm	\$ 11	
Code Blue Big Book Study W 7pm	\$ 425	
Cow Hollow Men's Group W 8pm	\$ 420	
Cow Hollow YP Tu 730pm	\$ 85	
Design For Living BB Tu/Th 730am	\$ 108	\$ 108
Design for Living Sat 8am	\$ 385	
Diamond Heights Tu 830pm	\$ 180	
Dignitaries Sympathy W 815pm	\$ 295	
Each Day a New Beginning F 7am	\$ 806	\$ 806
Each Day a New Beginning M 7am	\$ 186	
Each Day A New Beginning Su 8am	\$ 345	\$ 345
Each Day a New Beginning Th 7am	\$ 993	
Each Day a New Beginning Tu 7am	\$ 339	
Each Day a New Beginning W 7am	\$ 462	\$1,274
Early Start F 6pm	\$1,014	\$1,014
Easy Does It Tu 6pm	\$ 85	
Embarcadero Group 5D 1210pm	\$ 480	\$ 480
Eureka Valley Topic M 6pm	\$ 90	
Excelsior "Scent" Free for All Sa 8pm	\$ 60	
Extreme Makeover M 730pm	\$ 78	
Federal Speaker Su 12pm	\$ 129	
Firefighters & Friends Tu 10am	\$ 102	
Fireside Chat Group Th 8pm	\$ 177	
Fireside Chat Sa 9pm	\$ 156	
Friday All Groups F 830pm	\$ 229	\$ 687
Friday Lunchtime Step F 12pm	\$ 109	\$ 109
Friday Night Blast F 630pm	\$ 50	
Friday Night Book F 830pm	\$ 216	\$ 374
Friday Smokeless F 8pm	\$ 90	
Friendly Circle Beginners Su 715pm	\$ 65	
Haight Street Blues Tu 615pm	\$ 475	
Happy Destiny Sa 630pm	\$ 405	
Happy Hour Ladies Night F 530pm	\$ 135	
High Noon Friday 230pm	\$ 28	\$ 59
High Noon Monday 1215pm	\$ 119	\$ 119
High Noon Saturday 1215pm	\$ 472	
Hilldwellers M 8pm	\$ 362	
How Was Your Week? Sa 10am	\$ 175	
Huntington Square W 630pm	\$ 247	\$ 468
Join the Tribe Tu 7pm	\$ 199	
Like A Prayer Su 4pm	\$ 250	
Live and Let Live Su 8pm	\$ 37	\$ 37
Living Proof Th 630pm	\$ 113	
Living Sober on Sixth St.	\$ 25	

Continued on p. 17



YEAR OF THE TWELVE

Tradition Six: Anonymity Serves A.A.'s Primary Purpose

by Michael W.

“An A.A. Group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.”

In the 12 years of my sobriety, I keep learning how the steps are to the person, as the traditions are to the group. Whether attending A.A. in the USA, France, UK, China, Japan, India, or Canada, in every country in which

I've been lucky enough to attend a meeting, the operation is always the same thanks to the traditions. Tradition Six highlights several important points about the honesty, anonymity, and integrity of the A.A. group.

A.A. is not for sale; the traditions state the primary purpose is carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Regarding the nature of how the group exists, A.A.'s traditions tell us about being self-sufficient and protecting A.A. anonymity. Tradition

Six transcends any personal or group initiative to use the A.A. name to bring in money, advertise, or use A.A. in any type of business type transaction. Tradition Six ensures the privacy and safety of A.A. around the world. A group cannot claim to represent or promote A.A. Thus everyone is truly a servant to A.A., a servant to the group. Both the person and group remain anonymous. In Tradition Six, we become servants of anonymity.



SF Contributions	Apr. 12	YTD	SF Contributions	Apr. 12	YTD	SF Contributions	Apr. 12	YTD
Living Sober W 8pm	\$ 65		Saturday Night Regroup Sat 730pm	\$ 242		The Leaky Cauldron Su 1030am	\$ 183	
Living Sober with HIV W 6pm	\$ 1,070		Say Hey Group M-F 6pm	\$ 77	\$ 230	The Parent Trap M 1230pm	\$ 12	\$ 12
Lush Lounge Sa 2pm	\$ 279	\$ 279	Seacliff Th 830pm	\$ 75		The Pepper Group F 12pm	\$ 56	
Mid-Morning Support Su 1030am	\$ 337	\$ 630	Serendipity Sa 11am	\$ 137		There is a Solution Tu 6pm	\$ 373	
Mission Fellow. No Reservations Su	\$ 30		Serenity House	\$ 150	\$ 600	They Stopped In Time M 8pm	\$ 54	
Monday Monday M 1215pm	\$ 60		Sesame Step Tu 730pm	\$ 25	\$ 198	Thursday Night Book Club Th 7pm	\$ 42	
Monday Night BB Study M 8pm	\$ 60		SFPOA Th 7pm	\$ 200		Thursday Thumpers Th 7pm	\$ 100	
Newcomers Tu 8pm	\$ 118	\$ 118	Sinbar Su 8pm	\$ 101		Trudgers Discussion Su 7pm	\$ 120	
No Reservation M 12pm	\$ 388		Sober Saturday Sa 830am	\$ 94		Tuesday Big Book Study Tu 6pm	\$ 72	
O.A.D.W. Mon 7pm	\$ 31	\$ 31	Sometimes Slowly Sa 11am	\$ 306		Tuesday Downtown Tu 8pm	\$ 27	
Off Broadway Book Th 730pm	\$ 31		Sought to Improve Th 715pm	\$ 60		Tuesday's Daily Reflections Tu 8am	\$ 183	
Park Presidio M 830pm	\$ 54		Step Talk Su 830am	\$ 687	\$ 687	Twelve Steps to Happiness F 730pm	\$ 72	
Parkside Th 8pm	\$ 711	\$ 711	Steppin' Up Tu 630pm	\$ 307	\$ 307	Valencia Smokefree F 6pm	\$ 440	
Pax West M 12pm	\$ 558	\$ 558	Stepping Out Sat 430pm	\$ 90		Walk of Shame W 8pm	\$ 88	
Pax West Th 12pm	\$ 289		Sunday Bookworms Sun 730pm	\$ 109		We Care Tu 12pm	\$ 124	
Potrero Hill 12 x 12 M 630pm	\$ 211		Sunday Coffee With Bill 10am	\$ 27	\$ 27	We Have a Solution F 7pm	\$ 91	
Queers, Crackpots & Fallen Women	\$ 57		Sunday Night 3rd Step Group 5pm	\$ 148		Wednesday Afternoon With Bill	\$ 50	
Quitting Time MWF 530pm	\$ 500		Sunday Night Castro SD Su 730pm	\$ 454		Weekend Worker Sat 7am	\$ 60	\$ 60
Reality Farm Th 830pm	\$ 506		Sunday Silence Su 730pm	\$ 40		Wharfrats Th 815pm	\$ 200	
Rebound W 830pm	\$ 120		Sunset 11'ers Su	\$ 230		Women's Came to Believe Sa 10am	\$ 60	
Refugee Th 12pm	\$ 60		Sunset 11'ers Th	\$ 122		Women's Meeting There is a Solution	\$ 292	\$ 292
Rise N Shine Sun 10am	\$ 174		Sunset 11'ers Tu	\$ 91		Women's Promises F 7pm	\$ 538	
Room to Grow F 8pm	\$ 201	\$ 201	Sunset 9'ers Sa	\$ 110		Work In Progress Sat 7pm	\$ 189	
Rose Garden Big Book Th 1205pm	\$ 129		Sunset Speaker Step Sun 730pm	\$ 307		YAHOO Step Sa 1130am	\$ 357	
Saturday Afternoon Meditation 5pm	\$ 522		Surf Tu 8pm	\$ 104	\$ 104	San Francisco Total	\$10,083	\$38,788
Saturday Beginners Sat 6pm	\$ 152	\$ 646	Ten Years After Su 6pm	\$ 315	\$ 2,298	YTD	\$12,280	\$51,569
Saturday Easy Does It Sa 12pm	\$ 658		The Dry Dock Fellowship	\$ 195				

profit and loss statement: May 2012

	Mar 12	Budget	Jan - Mar 12	Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Income				
Group Contributions	9,768.36	10,400	39,338.49	39,250
Individual Contributions	2,065.42	6,350	11,316.07	12,881
Gratitude Month	245.12	90	3,506.44	2,775
Event Income	0.00	-	3,301.37	
Sales - Bookstore	10,229.68	11,390	30,690.83	30,958
Cost of Books Sold	-7,763.73	(7,425)	-22,826.04	(21,075)
Total Income	14,544.85	\$ 20,805	65,327.16	\$ 64,789
Expense				
Employee Expenses	10,944.31	16,381	29,314.84	35,721
Professional Fees	0.00	150	150.00	300
Postage	149.00	49	392.75	249
Rent - Office	3,810.91	3,810	11,432.73	11,430
Rent - Other	180.00	90	255.00	255
Access Expenses	365.00	708	1,740.00	2,128
IFB Literature	0.00	20	0.00	125
IFB Sponsored Events	2.55	15	47.02	30
PI/CPC	0.00	-	0.00	129
Sunshine Club/12th Step	0.00	-	0.00	-
Archives Committee	0.00	-	1,164.20	1,298
Filing/Fees	0.00	-	143.40	36
Insurance	0.00	705	1,697.00	2,383
Internet Expense	93.47	107	280.41	327
Office Supplies	207.51	105	1,166.27	564
Paper Purchased	87.28	200	847.40	1,127
Software Purchased	0.00	-	0.00	-
Shipping	0.00	-	0.00	-
Printing	0.00	-	0.00	-
Equipment Lease	0.00	-	1,596.90	1,600
Repair & Maintenance	271.57	285	1,032.81	915
Security System	0.00	118	0.00	118
Payroll Expenses	8.70	8	110.46	23
Telephone	489.47	400	1,420.69	1,102
Phone Book Listings	91.00	86	273.00	258
Travel	0.00	-	0.00	-
Training	0.00	-	48.95	50
Bad Checks	0.00	-	1.40	-
Miscellaneous Expense	0.00	-	0.03	-
Total Expense	16,700.77	\$ 23,237	53,115.26	\$ 60,168
Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	-2,155.92	\$ (2,432)	12,211.90	\$ 4,622
Interest Income	87.66	165	275.87	567
Depreciation/Amortization Expense	-584.00	(584)	-1,752.00	(1,752)
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	-2,652.26	\$ (2,851)	10,735.77	\$ 3,437

Treasurer's Report

For the month of March, group contributions were \$632 under budget. Individual contributions were \$4,285 under budget.

Gratitude month contributions were \$155 over budget.

Bookstore sales were \$1,160 over budget in March.

Employee expenses for March were \$5,437 under budget due to the timing of the payment of the Central Office Manager's deferred compensation. This expense will be paid for in May.

Unrestricted cash balance decreased from \$45,762.95 to \$40,911.54, which represents more than two months of average operating expenses.

REMINDER:

CENTRAL OFFICE

IS NOW OPEN ON

SATURDAYS

FROM

10AM TO 2PM



YEAR OF THE TWELVE

Step Six: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character


by Jamie M.

When I finished with my Fifth Step, my sponsor had me go home and read the Sixth Step in the Big Book. It was very simple. I then launched out on a program of self-improvement. I quit smoking, changed my diet, started an exercise program, and I don't know what else. But it just wasn't having the serenity-inducing effect I was looking for (even sober, I'm still looking for that altered state).

*even sober, I'm still
looking for that
altered state*

Then one day it hit me. The Sixth Step doesn't say anything about self-improvement programs. It says, "... were *entirely* ready to have *God* remove *all* these defects of character." The emphases are mine, of course. It also is the companion to the Seventh Step, in which we humbly ask. I hadn't asked, I hadn't been humble, and I wasn't involving God in my personal plans to do away with all my defects of character through a bombardment of will power. I wasn't doing the Sixth Step. I was doing virtuous stuff, but it wasn't the Sixth Step.

Then I got back on the prayer and meditation path (see Step Eleven)

and was more involved with improving my relationship with my Higher Power. This is one of the steps you will be working on for the rest of your life, y'all. But that's OK. Who's ever *entirely* ready? Who ever sincerely wants *all* their character defects removed (come on, admit it, you still love at least some of them). And, as the 12 & 12 discusses in various chapters, we get beaten into reasonableness about having the obsession to drink removed, but once we've gotten out of the fire we sometimes are willing to stay in the frying pan. Oh well, "progress not perfection...." 

Love and service

{Dr. Bob} held three concepts in particularly high regard. One was simplicity—in his own life-style and in practicing the A.A. way of life. Second, he believed in tolerance of other people's ideas, in speaking out "with kindness and consideration for others," and in guarding that erring member, the tongue." Third, he believed that one's job in A.A. was to "get sober and stay sober" and "never to be so complacent that we're not willing to extend that help to our less fortunate brothers."

Dr Bob firmly believed that "love and service" are the cornerstones of Alcoholics Anonymous."

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Novato Fellowship's

Founders Day Celebration

Gratefully 77 Years of Solutions

Saturday, June 9, 2012

Stafford Lake, Novato Blvd.

Live Music, Softball, Jumpy House, Volleyball,
Fishing, Horseshoes, Fun For All!

9am to 5pm

\$12 suggested donation, kids 12 and under eat free

Guest Speaker at 2pm

\$10 car/park entrance fee, no dogs

See www.aasf.org for more info. and directions

June 2012

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Don't miss The Point! Please give us your new address and phone number.

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You can also **email** or **phone** us with your new contact information.
thepoint@asf.org / San Francisco (415) 674-1821 / Marin (415) 499-0400

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