

SONOMA COUNTY INTERGROUP

FELLOWSHIP NEWS



VOLUME 100, ISSUE 10

OCTOBER 2005

Have I Relapsed?

As I walked through the doors of my home group, a wave of apprehension swept over me. After a year and a half of sobriety, I again had to raise my hand and introduce myself as a newcomer. I had gone through the usual alcoholic emotions proceeding my relapse, anger, regret, and depression; however fear seemed to dominate me as I took my seat. The sea of faces was familiar to me, almost each and every one. I was active in my fellowship, attended many meetings weekly, held a couple of trusted service positions, have a sponsor, and sponsor other men. I thought that even though I hadn't drank, the decision to take double the dose of my prescribed medication, when I had not needed them, was just another facet of my alcoholism manifesting itself in yet another form of old behavior.

When the preamble had been read and the Serenity prayer recited, I tried to still my mind, but the usual stream of dialogue continued. I focused on the readings, and the peace of mind that I always find at a meeting, begin to filter through in the form of our sayings that can be found on the walls of almost any A.A. meeting place. "Easy Does It" seemed to speak the loudest to me, so I settled back and began to clear my mind of the thoughts that had distracted me for almost two and a half weeks constantly. Instead of beating myself up for what happened, I began to think of how my experience could benefit others. As "How it works" was read, the words "grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty" jumped out at me. When the tenth step was read, I felt it was most appropriate to my situation.

By the time that newcomers were asked to introduce themselves, I was more than relieved to do so. I had come to the realization that by making this simple admission I was in reality showing a room-full of alcoholics how to practice a principle - the principle of honesty in all our affairs. More importantly to me, I was becoming humble and remaining teachable. I realized also that I was never alone, and that fear is never real, because I was greeted and accepted with the same unconditional love that I was given as a newcomer, and as a member with considerable sobriety time.

After the meeting a gentleman with longstanding sobriety approached me and suggested that I might want to reconsider calling myself a newcomer technically because I hadn't drank. A lot of other folks said it is a judgment call. Now I am a little confused. Is taking two pills that were prescribed to me considered an alcoholic relapse? Part of me wants to say no, I didn't relapse, but another part of me says that is an ego-based idea that should be put out of my mind. I know that I am not the only one who has ever faced this dilemma. This has been a problem for our fellowship for a long

Our singleness of purpose can be very confusing to someone with a dual diagnosis. I have also found that there are as many ideas about how an honest program should be worked as there are people in them. I gave up the need to always be right a long time ago and am always open to suggestions, but in the end I'm the one who has to live with myself, and the decisions I make. I make mistakes, and I suppose that sometimes I could even make a mistake about whether or not I made a mistake. What I do know is that with the program of alcoholics anonymous, the steps, a sponsor, and most importantly, a higher power in my life, I am blessed with being able to look at my behavior, and if I'm not sure about my actions, I have a whole fellowship of loving, caring alcoholics who will scrutinize them and gently suggest what I might want to change.

A.A. is a place where I can take my problems, my questions, and my solutions, and share them with others who are afflicted with my disease. Every meeting is an encounter with my higher power, and I always leave with a new perspective to ponder. Newcomer or not, I cannot stay sober until I am true to myself, and A.A. is where I learn to do

Humbly Submitted, - Ray T.

S.C.I.F. presents THE ANNUAL A.A. HALLOWEEN DANCE

Meeting: 7:00-8:00 PM Speaker: Brooke G. from Marin County



Dance :8:30-Midnight Suggested Donation \$10

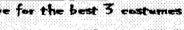
Friday, October 28'th

Sebastopol Community Center, 390 Morris St., Sebastopol, 95472

Live band and D.J. Featuring sober blues cover band BLUESOMATIC



Costume Contest: Prizes will be for the best 3 costumes





Volunteers Needed Call Craig G. (BATMAN)

AUGUST 2005 Jason H. 8/31/1986

Tom R. 8/6/1990

Charles W.8/17/1999



SEPTEMBER 2005 Deborah P. 9/23/1993

Ken G. 9/9/2001

Carolyn A. 9/22/2001

Patricia R. 9/18/1999

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SCIF INFO

Toronto AA

"Welcome to Toronto, Kristina! Can I help you get where you are going?" that was a red shirted woman on the corner of the main street in Toronto, two miles away from the Convention Center, one of 2000 volunteers sprinkled like sugar on a donut all over the city of Toronto. Evervwhere you looked, ate, walked, people watched, there we were. Red Shirts for local service people and countless thousands of happy joyous and frees with convention name badges, taking in the sights. The 70th International Convention "I AM RESPONSIBLE" hosted something like sixty thousand AAs and their families from over 90 countries for the most memorable experience in my sobriety (sober date, December 2, 2000).

Here are some of the highlights I'm happy to share: In a workshop entitled, Emotional Sobriety, an AA who had become a trusted companion of Mother Teresa brought tears to our eyes as she told why the candidate for sainthood (not an AA!) loved Alcoholics Anonymous.

AA seemed to help people with the only disease Mother Teresa could not cure with the gifts God gave her! When the AA declined wine at a bedside communion, Mother T squeezed her hand and thanked her for protecting something so precious. I AM RESPONSIBLE! At the opening ceremony, the first of over 90 flags paying tribute to sobriety in AA was a feathered walking stick carried by a sober Native American; the experience of one AA in India, sharing that in that country of 1 billion, over the past 40 years, AA has made inroads to the extent of 30,000 members in 800 meetings today.

Sober women are rare, as there is a great stigma, but they are there (noticed on the web a women's meeting in New Delhi, you go girls!); the awarding of the 25millionth Big Book to the Warden of San Quentin; sanging Amazing Grace with Judy C. (alcoholic folk singing hero of my childhood) and about sixty thousand others, and then the famous moment of silence, an entire arena, silent and grateful for the gift we have been lavishly given; at a meeting on AA in Africa and the Middle

East, one voung AA was going back to Tanzania with 20 Big Books in Swahili to make his amends. He'd found a Loner in Zanzibar with 25 years, (he, in his mid twenties had 8) and they were going to give books out in hospitals throughout Dar Es Salaam. That's carrying the message! In a marathon meeting, hearing shares of other mothers from around the world who had left babies behind, reunited at last, in sobriety. We hear our own story and it gives us hope; and finally, at the last meeting, marking the 40th anniversary of the Responsibility Statement, given to AA in Toronto's last International Convention,

There were millennia of sobriety in that city; countless Steps taken on the Road to Happy Destiny. As we left the stadium after the final big meeting, a nonAA usher rushed up and shook my and said, "We're going to miss you." Thank you God for AA and for the constant opportunities it gives each of us to carry the message. I am responsible.

--KristinaF. (Petaluma Fellowship Group)

Sponsors, you've got to love 'em...

Our literature doesn't really give guidelines for sponsors. There isn't anything in the first 164 pages of the Big Book, or in the 12 x 12, either. What I know I learned from the sponsors I have had the privilege of working with over the 15 years of my recovery. I did what I have been taught, kept what I liked and left the rest behind. Here is the way I work with others:

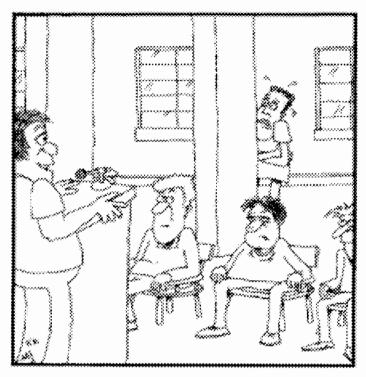
I don't fish for sponsees. Like AA, I am a program of attraction. If a woman wants to work with me, she needs to ask me to help her. This is the first step, willingness. Once we sit down to talk, I explain that I expect her to call me, and I will call her back, but not initiate contact. I believe it is important for a newcomer to take charge of her own program from the beginning. And it is her program. I cannot keep anyone sober, not even myself; I rely on my conscious contact with God to maintain my recovery. While I expect her to find her own way to do her very important personal program, in the beginning, if she wants what I have, it might be a good idea to do what I did to get it: 90 meetings in 90 days, get a service commitment, establish a home group, and work the steps to the best of her ability. I also insist that she collect phone numbers of women she admires, in case I am not available, as I do have a life; if I didn't why would she want me to sponsor her?

Even so, I never tell a sponsee what to do. I suggest actions that have worked for me, and help her examine her motives in whatever action she decides upon. Even if I disagree, I honor my sponsee's decisions. It is more important to be kind than it is to be right, after all.

My recovery is the most important thing in my life. Everything else depends on it remaining healthy. Some effort is needed for that to happen. And I take it seriously. But I encourage my sponsee to take her *self* lightly, & learn to laugh at her self. Everyone falls down when first learning something new. I tell her, if an action feels uncomfortable, call me, and we will work it out. Even after we finish the steps together, my sponsee can call whenever she needs to talk. We are only as sick as our secrets. Talking about those things that make us cringe inside takes the power out of them. And whatever my sponsee tells me stays with me.

I have had five different sponsors in my sobriety. My first one and I came to an impasse and ended our relationship. I moved away, my sponsor moved away. And many sponsees have graced my sobriety as well. If they decide they need to move on, I bless them and wish them well. Sponsorship is not a popularity contest. It is a position of honor and trust. What I want most for my sponsee is whatever best serves her sobriety. And I receive so much more from this service that what I give. It is truly a blessing to be a sober woman, and know that I have something to give back.

THE HOPEFULLY HARMLESS PAGE



"Could I get the person behind the pole to come up & share?"

Who's Who??

A social drinker, a problem drinker and a alcoholic were sitting at a bar.

The bartender served them all the exact same drinks, each had a fly in it.

How do you tell the alcoholic, the problem and the social drinker apart?

The social drinker asks the bartender for a diet coke, and pushes the fly and drink away.

The problem drinker asks the bartender to give him another drink with out the fly.

The alcoholic is the one who has the fly by the nape of the neck, yelling, "Spit it out... that's MY drink!"

YOU MIGHT BE AN ALCOHOLIC IF: MASCULINE SLANT

you think the sun shining in your face is God's flashlight telling you to get up and go homeyou think alcohol abuse is spilling your drink.
on the way to the bathroom, someone's always stepping on your handsyou don't have any friends, just drinking buddies.
you quit calling in sick. You let your wife do ityou pee in the kitchen sink while mixing another drink.
selling beer cans seems like a weekly bonusyou celebrate getting out of jail by getting drunk.
you decorate your Christmas tree with chains of beer tabsno visit to a friend's house is complete until you've puked on their carpet.
your job is interfering with your drinkingthe toilet seat keeps hitting you in the back of the head.
you throw-up on purpose so you can hold moreyou loose your car at least once a week
it's normal to drive with one eye shut so not to see doubleyou order a keg of beer for your kid's first birthday party.
you measure distance by how many beers it takes to get thereyour main prayer is "God, get me out of this and I'll never drink again".
you get the shakes so bad you could thread a sewing machine while it's runningyou think your only drinking problem is when you're out.
you are getting to the point that you're thoroughly disgustingyou buy your morning drink with a roll of pennies.

PAGE 4 Month of: Year to Date August-05 Income Expense Net Income Expense Net Central Office Groups Individuals Teleservice Web Site Newsletter Interest Subtotal Bookstore Activities Alkathons Seminars TOTAL **Assets & Liabilities** Memo: Cash in Bank & Petty Cash

ash in Bank & Petty Cash	
epaid Expenses	
abilities	
Subtotal	

Prudent Reserve Liabilities Total (unassigned funds)

FROM THE BATCAVE...

iterature Inventories

Total Assets & Liabilities

Property

October is the beginning of my favorite time of year. I love Halloween, and as far as I'm concerned, October is the launch of the whole Holiday season. I mean after Halloween, it seems like one moment you're taking off your costume, and another minute you're basting a turkey, and next thing you know, Santa is coming down the chimney for Christmas.

So, I get excited every year about October, because it means we're on the fast track to fun times.

Not that the fun every really ended, I mean I'm sure that all of you enjoyed International Talk Like a Pirate Day last month on September 19th, right? And we had that great dance in late August to celebrate it early; that was fun, right? So, see you've just got to have fun all the time, or else being sober just isn't worth it.

I've said this before and I'll say it again, if you are new to sobriety, or you just haven't learned to have fun yet, and you think that the good times are over now because you've joined AA. Well I'm here to tell you that if sobriety wasn't fun, I wouldn't do it all. As it says in the Big Book, we are not a glum lot!

So, before I tell you all the fun that we have coming up at the end of this month, let me take a small detour and thank some of the people who really helped out at the Hot Caribbean Pirate Dance. I would have thanked them before, but last month I blew it, and never got my article submitted on time. Duh!! There were some people who really went beyond the call of service to help out. First off I want to thank our speaker, Becca G., and Dennis M. for running the meeting, Bluesomatic for playing great music for us, and doing so at minimum charge as a service to AA. Then I'd like to thank Mike K. who helped me truck all the stuff out to the dance. At the community center, I had a last minute and first time decorating coordinator, John N. who took over when I found my normal coordinator was sick. Then there were lots of volunteers, (we didn't have to make anybody walk the plank) who helped setup, and I don't know their names, but there were people from St. Anthony's farm, and A Step Up who came and helped throughout the whole thing. Then I'd like to thank Preston, Dorian, Peggy, and Karen for working the front door. Then I had lots of helpers for cleanup, and I had Larry O, help with cleanup coordination. But I was in a bind, I found out at the last minute that I didn't have a truck driver to drive all the party stuff back to the bookstore, and Jake, came through with his truck. More great news is that I now have a full time cleanup coordinator who will be helping to get everything put away and taken to the bookstore after events. He helped this last dance and I'm very excited to announce that Jason C. is our new cleanup coordinator.

Ok, ok, so what about the event that happens this month you ask? Well, I came up with this really great idea. It's kind of out there, but I hope all of you can get behind this crazy thought. We could have a dance on FRIDAY, October 28th, at the Sebastopol Community Center, and get this, everyone will come dressed up as whatever they want! They can come dressed in funny costumes, sexy ones, scary ones, and just all around outrageous costumes. We could even have a small costume contest. What do you think? I was thinking it would be fun to decorate it with skeletons, witches, carved pumpkins, and spider webs. I know it sounds insane, but so was International Talk-Like-A-Pirate Day. So, get a costume together and come on out to the dance. It looks like I have the same great band that played at the pirate dance, Bluesomatic, and we'll be doing the same format of Band and DJ rotating so that everyone can hear the kind of music to which they like to dance.

I'll need volunteers, so call me at Нарру Halloween everybody! Craig G. (BATMAN)

HAPPY TRAILS

This months meeting/hike will be on Sunday October 30. We will Thike in Olympali park, just north gof Novato. Chris B. will beg

leading the hike. Meet at the SRJC Bailey Field parking lot 10:00 to carpool or the trailhead at 10:45. Follow the signs to Olympali. Park off 101 So. And

you will come to a parking area and the trailhead

Views are terrific and the Meadow trail is very pretty. Bring a smile, lunch and water.

Ouestions:

Call Chris B.

Jeanine

Minutes of August 22, 2005 SCIF General Meeting

Tradition 8 was read by Annie and Concept 8 was read by Francis and the Preamble was read by Bob.

INTRO OF NEW REPS: Scott from Sunday How It Works at Newanga; Randy from Attitude Adjustment; Barbara from Daily Reflections; Jan from Wednesday Women's Step Study and Discussion; and Rachel from Sebastopol Sunday Niters.

August Birthdays: Charles 6 yrs, Tom R. 15 yrs, Victoria 2 yrs, and Greg 18 months.

Minutes of July 25, 2005, SCIF General Meeting were reviewed and then approved with one correction: Francis not Frances.

REGISTRAR: Deborah (absent)

H&I: Francis reported for Mark V.: H&I meets on the first Wednesday of each month with an orientation for folks new to H&I taking place at 5:45pm followed by the business meeting at 6:15pm.

GENERAL SERVICE: Kenin relayed the story of the phone call Bill made to Rev. Walter Tunks that set in motion the final stages of AA's founding that led to Bill's first call and meeting with Dr. Bob that eventually led to the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous. A voice recording of Bill's recantation of this story is available on file at the General Service Office Archives. G.S.O. is dedicated to discovering AA's roots and growth around the world. Our Area Archives do the same within the California Northern Coastal Area as do our District Archives within Sonoma County. Watch for the Archives displays at the upcoming Unity Day which will occur on November 5th at St. Mark's Church on Mayette Ave. in Santa Rosa.

PI/CPC: Dave: Dave indicated that they meet the 2nd Wednesday of each month at SR City Hall Lounge w/ speaker training at 7:00pm and Business meeting at 7:30pm. He explained that the function of this committee and that they have been distributing literature to hospitals, police stations, senior centers and the like. Currently distributing copies of Living Sober and the Big Book to local libraries.

BRIDGING THE GAP: Susy indicated that the primary purpose of BtG is to introduce the newly released residents of treatment facilities to AA in their local community. BtG utilizes a list of AA volunteers to match up with the newly released AA newcomer and take them to their 1st meeting. All that is required to be a volunteer is 6 months sobriety, working knowledge of the steps and a car is helpful. We did 3 presentations last month and had 40 requests last month, with 15 local requests and 18 out-of-district requests and 7 out-of- area requests. BtG is putting together a CD with all of our information to take to the *Bridging the Gap World Conference* to be held in St. Joe, Missouri on September 9, 10 and 11th.

INTERGROUP CHAIR: Bob: reviewed and explained the handout that had been distributed "Suggested Procedure For Doing Business at SCIF".

VICE CHAIR: Steve B. reported he orientated 7 new reps this evening.

TREASURER: Tom directed everyone to page 4 and 5 of the newsletter to review monthly financial report; explained some of the costs in Teleservice including: the Answering Service, Ad in the Press Democrat, and monthly Phone Service charges. He noted that the newsletter costs \$600/mo to produce and that the web page costs very little each month and he elaborated on the Year to Date Totals for expenses and contributions then indicated that he is available by phone for any questions regarding Intergroup finances via his home number listed in the Newsletter and by cell phone #707-228-0306.

BOOKSTORE: Gloria indicated that a whopping 4,974 chips were sold in the month of July attributable to the half price on chips sale. She reviewed the new price list that was distributed and instructed Reps to take it back/report price changes to their groups. Volunteer opening on the 3rd Saturday from 11am-3pm of each month. She apologized for forgetting to bring the Seminar Flyers she Xeroxed for Reps.

OUTREACH: Maurice thanked everyone for their help on committee and asked Reps to make an announcement regarding Intergroup Representation at meetings that lack Intergroup Reps.

ACTIVITIES: Craig asked Reps to remind their fellow that the dance will be held on a Friday not on a Saturday: Pirate/Caribbean Dance will be held on August 26th at Sebatopol Community Center w/ the Blusomatics playing along with DJ and has a Caribbean/Pirate theme. See bright yellow flyers for tips on speaking like a pirate whom he said would be fun to do when announcing the event at your meetings arrgh. Volunteers needed at 5pm for set up and after the dance is over to help clean up. Volunteers should check in with Craig upon arrival. Halloween Dance in the works.

SEMINARS: Susy indicated that the next Seminar will occur on September 17^{th.} 3-5pm, at the Bookstore, entitled *Practicing Princi*pals in All of Our Affairs. ALCATHOINS: Brian was absent, but Bob reported that the site for 2005 Alcathons has been secured by Brian.

TELESERVICE: Dave L. indicated that Teleservice meets monthly on the 2nd Monday at the Bookstore and they are in need of committee members to participate in the monthly running of Teleservice. He announced one open shift available on Thursday's overnight from 10pm to 6am.

NEWSLETTER/COMMUNICATIONS:

Charles indicated that the new deadline for submissions to newsletter is the 2nd Monday of the month and the newest date for the Newsletter Proof Reading Committee is the 3rd Tuesday of each month at his home-email him if you are interested in participating.

OLD BUSINESS: none

NEW BUSINESS/Group Sharing: Craig from SCYPAA announced a meeting/Marine World trip everyone invited to attend on September 10th, Also, he announced on behalf of SCYPAA that they would like to have a Liaison attend Intergroup to facilitate the cross flow of information and that they now have 3 meetings in the county; the newest occurring at the Phoenix Theatre in Petaluma and hope to do dances on alternate months that SCIF doesn't have one planned.

Randy from Attitude Adjustment presented a motion to have meetings designate on the meeting schedule whether they allow children in attendance. Much discussion ensued, no one seconded his motion, so it died on the floor.

SUMMATION by Steve:

Dance Friday not Saturday night

Bookstore Inventory on Thursdayvolunteers needed

New Price list in effect 9/1/05

Sept 17th Seminar at Bookstore

Teleservice looking for folks to join committee-contact Dave

SCYPAA wants provide liaison to Intergroup to provide info about SCYPAA activities

Motion failed to designate meetings as children or no children.

Gratefully in service, Kim

October 2005

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	_					1
2	3 General Service 6:45ServiceManual / New Rep Or. 7:30 Bus.@FaithLutheran	4	5 H&I 5:45 New Rep 6:15 Bus.@ Senior Ctr.	<u>6</u>	2	8 PetalumaFellowship- MOVING-ON Alcathon 6AM-MIDNIGHT TONS OF FUN/FOOD/ EXCITEMENT/ ACTIVITIES/ SPEAKERS
9	10 SCIF 6pm Teleservice 7:15 ICSC/8pm Steering Committee	11	12 PI/CPC 7pm Training 7:30 Business SR CITY HALL	13	LAST DAY OF MEETINGS @ THE PETALUMA FELLOWSHIP	<u>15</u>
16	<u>17</u>	18 Bridging- theGap 7pm Bookstore	19	20	21	22
23	24 Intergroup 7:30 New Rep 8pm Business	25 General Service 8:15 Dist12 @ SCIF Bookstore	26	27	28 HALLOWEEN DANCE	<u>29</u>
30 Happy Trails 10am SRJC pLot Olampali State Park	31 BOOKSTORE INVENTORY Volunteers NEEDED!! 2pm					

AA Hotline/Teleservice

Scheduler: Dave L.

12 Step Coordinator: James

Santa Rosa Hotline: 544-1300

Long-Distance: 800-224-1300

Petaluma Hotline:7625122

Sonoma Hotline: 938-2027

Spanish Hotline: 545-7417

Intergroup Officers

Chair: Bob K

Vice-Chair: Steve B

Secretary: Kim M

Treasurer: Tom R

Registrar: Deborah P!

Intergroup Chairs / Committees

Activities: Craig G

Alcathons: Brian A

Hotline: David L

Outreach: Maurice

Seminars: Susy

Newsletter: Charles W

New Meetings

Santa Rosa

'Great Reality' (O) (W)

Thursday 6:30

3333 Chanate Rd.

BIG BOOK STUDY

Cloverdale

'Sisters in Step' (C) (W)

Tuesday 6pm (no court papers signed)

208 N. Commercial

Meeting Changes

Petaluma

'Petaluma Fellowship BDay Meeting'

Last Tuesday @ 7:30pm

Luchessi Park 320 N. McDowell

No Longer Meeting

'Petaluma Fellowship Hall'

ALL MEETINGS ARE MOVING

Last Meeting on 10/14/2005

NEW LOCATION NOT YET SECURED

····

For Changes Contact Russell

Gloria's Corner

Openings (every other) Fri. 10-2. One Sat. a month 11-3. Cassettes are 1/2 off now... they are being replaced so we can bring in CD's. We now have side extensions for

the literature racks. They hold books and attach at the side of regular racks.

-Gloria

(SCIF Bookstore Manager—phone # 707-546-2066)



CONTACT INFORMATION

Sonoma County General Service

PO Box 536 Santa Rosa, CA 95402

Area 22 H & I Treasurer

PO Box 192490 San Francisco, CA 94119-2490

General Service Office

PO Box 459, Grand Central Station

New York, NY 10163

CA Northern Coastal Area Treasury

PO Box 884222 San Francisco, CA 94118

Sonoma County PI/CPC*

PO Box 11350 Santa Rosa, CA 95406

SCIF BOOKSTORE

750 Mendocino Ave., #10 Santa Rosa, CA 95402

707-546-2066



Editor/Web Servant: Charles W. Directory Changes: Russell

Sonoma County General Service

DCMC: Margrete V.

Alt. DCMC: Kenin H.

Registrar: Chris B.

Archives: Corv B.

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Newsletter: Bill K...

Bridging the Gap: Bob F.

PI/CPC: Yannick W.

Recording Secretary Donna K.

Treasurer Vinnie M.

H & I Kelly T.

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