

HIGH SOBRIETY

2215 S. El Camino Real, Suite 204
San Mateo, CA 94403

Monthly newsletter of the
SAN MATEO COUNTY FELLOWSHIP
OF AA

650-577-1310
aa-san-mateo.org
aasanmateo@gmail.com

July 2020

SMC Fellowship News

Some Meetings Beginning to Reopen – But we still should remain cautious

As local restrictions are easing, particularly those pertaining to churches, some groups have begun having in-person meetings again with social distancing and certain protocols in place.

Anticipating this, there are guidelines for reopening meetings posted on our Central Office website. These guidelines were put together by our Advisory Committee, using information from other fellowships as well as recommendations from the CDC and local mandates from the county. The list is lengthy...resuming meetings will not be as simple as unlocking the doors and having a meeting. You are encouraged to check these guidelines, as well as communicate with the facility where your meeting is held for their expectations and requirements. We don't want to put their ability to remain open in jeopardy. Also, please be aware of the fact that churches and other facilities are currently busy making the necessary changes they need to make to resume their businesses. We should not bother them repeatedly with inquiries into when we can resume.

Please remember that the pandemic is not over and that cases are beginning to increase again. It is being recommended that older adults and people with medical

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conditions that put them more at risk should still not attend public gatherings.

Lastly, if your group does begin meeting in person again, please let Central Office know so we can update our schedules, even if you do not wish it to be posted publicly yet.

Monthly Service Committee Meetings

TELESERVICE

quarterly - TBA

DELEGATES TO CENTRAL OFFICE July 7th , 7:30pm on Zoom

Meeting ID: 843 4248 4626, To phone in: +1-669-900-6833

PI/CPC

July 7th , 7:00pm on Zoom

Zoom info to be announced.

GENERAL SERVICE

July 21st on Zoom, 7:00 orientation/concept study, 7:30 pm business meeting

Meeting ID: 752 6058 2164, Password: 096224. To phone in: +1-669-900-9128

PENNYPA (Peninsula Young People in AA)

cxl'd until further notice

H&I (Hospitals & Institutions)

cxl'd until further notice

BRIDGING THE GAP

cxl'd until further notice

Without as much 7th Tradition money coming in from meetings, contributions to our Central Office and General Service in New York are going to be gravely diminished. We need these vital services so please consider sending a donation if you are able. Thank you.

Donations to **Central Office** can be made online at: <https://aa-san-mateo.org/contributions> . Checks payable to San Mateo County Fellowship may be sent to: 2215 S. El Camino Real, Ste. 204, San Mateo, CA 94403.

Donations to **General Service** in New York can be made online at www.aa.org by clicking "Make a Contribution", or contributions may also be sent by mail to: General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

H&I Contributions: <https://www.handinorcal.org/contribute>

or via mail to:

No. California H&I

P.O. Box 192490

San Francisco, CA 94119-2490

(Make checks payable to: NORCAL H&I and note your Area #65 on the check)

Teleservice

Are you interested in a commitment you can do from home?

Teleservice, which allows the hand of AA to be available 24/7 in our county, currently has backline positions to fill. The function of a backline volunteer is to make sure the phone line is transferred to the correct person and to support the front line if a call runs long. Requirements are one year of sobriety, a working knowledge of the steps, and a working telephone. To be of service, please contact Eden C., Chair at (650) 868-1116 or Erin S., Information Chair at (408) 431-4365.

What does *our* Central Office do?

The San Mateo County Fellowship's Central Office belongs to the A.A. groups of San Mateo County. We help carry A.A.'s message in the following ways (and more):

- ❖ Maintain a 24/7 telephone line which responds to inquiries from still-suffering alcoholics seeking help, A.A. members in need of information, and from members of the professional community and the general public. After office hours, this line is staffed by Teleservice volunteers.
- ❖ Maintain a Twelfth Step volunteer list.
- ❖ Maintain and publish group meeting schedules, in print, on our website, and in the Meeting Guide App.
- ❖ We stock a large selection books and pamphlets for sale (many are available in Spanish).
- ❖ We offer sobriety chips for sale, for both individuals and groups.
- ❖ We work closely with local A.A. service committees: Bridging the Gap, Hospitals and Institutions, Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community, as well as with San Mateo County General Service District 5 and the Northern California Council of Alcoholics Anonymous
- ❖ We support and participate in many local A.A. events such as Unity Day and the holiday Alkathons.
- ❖ We maintain our web site, aa-san-mateo.org, with up-to-date meeting listings, a schedule of A.A. events, the *High Sobriety* newsletter, and links to other A.A. web sites,
- ❖ We maintain a library of A.A. speaker CDs which are available for rent for a nominal fee.
- ❖ We publish the newsletter, *High Sobriety*, sent at no charge to all registered San Mateo County A.A. groups and available by subscription to all A.A. members. Faithful Fivers receive a free copy as well.

Who pays for our Central Office? We, the members of A.A., do. Our Seventh Tradition states that we are self-supporting through our own contributions. Central Office also receives donations from individual alcoholics (such as through our Faithful Fivers program). Other sources include our annual anniversary party and income from the sale of A.A. literature.

Central Office is CURRENTLY open MONDAY AND FRIDAY from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Become a Faithful Fiver

Pledge \$5 per month (or more) to support your Central Office. You can pay monthly, quarterly, or annually. Your personal contributions make our vital services possible.

Call (650) 577-1310 Monday-Friday between 8:30 and 4:30, or stop by Central Office to enroll. All Fivers receive a copy of High Sobriety!



five



V



Does your Group have a Central Office Delegate?

All groups should! As a delegate, you attend a monthly meeting to learn about everything currently going on in our fellowship. You then report these things back to your group. You are also your group's voice in some of the decisions made in the fellowship. Only about 10% of our groups currently have a Central Office Delegate. Volunteer to be your group's now!



Birthday Club



If you'd like to have your birthday listed in High Sobriety (some members contribute an amount for each year of sobriety), please send your donation, with your name and city, number of years of sobriety, sobriety date, and phone number (optional) to Central Office.

Robin D 36yrs Redwood Shores
Frances S 31 yrs Burlingame

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Dances with Defects

Step 7 - Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

When I was drinking, my life was about getting things: getting the next drink, getting rich and famous, getting a girlfriend, getting really drunk. This continued when I became sober. I wanted to get through the Steps fast, so I could get those Promises or maybe just get back to drinking. So when I read those two paragraphs in the Big Book on Steps Six and Seven, I thought, "Hey, I can knock this off in one night. I'll throw out everything I don't need and God the garbageman will take it away so I never have to think about it again." I mouthed the prayer, "We have now completed Step Seven," and thought, "Okay, what do I get for getting through that?"

I didn't get much, because most of the stuff I threw out just sat on the curb and stunk things up. Wasn't God supposed to take care of this for me, so I could be the envy of all my friends and the defect-free man of the year? The first thing I learned was, it wasn't about my personal quest for perfection, it was about making me better fit to serve. And I better not count on a one-time garbage pickup changing everything. As Step Ten says, "We continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them." So this action of asking God for help with my defects needs to continue indefinitely. The "Twelve and Twelve" sums up my reaction to that: "Character building through suffering might be all right for saints, but it certainly didn't appeal to us."

I finally accepted I'd be doing Six and Seven for a while. A friend of mine calls Six the most alcoholic of all the Steps, and it certainly was, the way I read it, which was "Were absolutely, unconditionally, entirely ready to have no one less than God himself personally remove every last shred of anything that causes me pain." And, of course, falling short of that perfection is a great excuse to drink. But then I saw the word *humbly* in Step Seven; it was a new word for me. I asked around, and one meaning I heard was "rightsized." In other words, I wasn't the most defective guy on the planet, nor the least, but somewhere in the middle.

So I was responsible for approaching God with a right-sized appraisal of my defects. I got lots of help from insightful sponsors. And since people had often said to me, "You need professional help," I went to a therapist as well. Just as I had surrendered my drinking problem to the process of AA recovery, I needed to surrender my character to this process of self-inquiry. Then I could approach God humbly, and he'd take care of the rest. There was one sticking point for me: That's not what a couple of old-timers I respected said. They distilled Step Six down to "Don't do what you want to do," and Step Seven down to "Do what you don't want to do."

This action orientation has been good for me in sobriety. Rather than think myself into right actions, I can act myself into right thinking. Rather than be dashed on the rocks by my frequent emotional squalls, I can anchor myself in simple actions and sit tight through the storms, confident that it will pass. My thoughts are often warped, my emotions sick, but if my actions remain within reason, I may save myself an amends. And, one day at a time, I can focus on not practicing a particular defect, especially if I keep myself busy doing things I don't want to do--like service.

It works--it really does. But being an alcoholic, I had to find a way to screw it up. And I did, with a nasty, punitive attitude toward myself, a rigid perfectionism that made me crave a drink rather than continue in this puritan lifestyle. That's certainly not the spirit of the prayer that says God wants all of me, good and bad.

Someone helped me by saying when a defect appeared, I should think of it as a part of myself and ask for acceptance. Rather than trying to squash it, which just drives it underground, I should welcome it to the party, even greet it with good humor. I could play Name That Tune. There's "Pour Me," a classic country song; "The Ingratitude Blues"; and then there's that rock ballad, "If You'd Only Let Me Fix You." Instead of getting so uptight, I could dance with my defects. Might as well, they're always gonna be there.

A story retold by Anthony de Mello in *One Minute Wisdom*, helps me:

"One of the disconcerting--and delightful--teachings of the master was: God is closer to sinners than saints. This is how he explained it: God in heaven holds each person by a string.

When you sin, you cut the string. Then God ties it up again, making a knot--and thereby bringing you a little closer to him. Again and again, your sins cut the string--and with each further knot God keeps drawing you closer and closer."

My sister, who was fighting cancer, taught me about acceptance when she stopped fighting it. Instead, she tried "talking" to her cancer, since it is part of her, and seeing what it could teach her. She's become grateful, to a degree, for having cancer because of what it's taught her. She practices acceptance, but not resignation, and has been in remission for several years now.

Emerson said, "There is a crack in everything God has made." When I begin to gently accept my cracks, my weaknesses, I can accept them in you as well. And AA was founded upon the strength of shared weakness.

Recently, I went through a period where I had very little patience with my children, people at work, and my wife. I tried my best to blame all of them, but finally admitted maybe I was the problem. That admission opened the door, and in came awareness, which is so very annoying when it's not accompanied by surrender. Turn to God for help? Often it just doesn't occur to me. I'm always having those V-8 moments, hitting myself in the head thinking, "I could've had a Higher Power!" Finally I got uncomfortable enough to actually pray about it.

My prayers are often answered instantly, in the sense that just the intention of praying helps me. It's like being sick and not wanting to call the doctor. The moment I finally make a doctor's appointment, I start feeling better, to the point where, when I finally see the doctor, I'm embarrassed by how good I feel.

In this case, by praying, my ears were suddenly opened, and I heard someone suggest perhaps I was getting impatient with others because I didn't feel I had enough time for myself. I decided I would wake up earlier and take a little time for me. Of course, waking up earlier requires discipline, and my first instinct is to get the whip out. After weeks of struggling, someone suggested I might be able to wake up earlier if I went to bed earlier--it had never occurred to me. So I did what I didn't want to do, passed up a little television, and went to bed earlier. That time for myself in the morning has

made a huge difference. I'm much more patient and tolerant.

So I do get benefits from this process, but not exactly when I'd like, in the way I expect, or for reasons I fully comprehend. But when I humbly ask, God (often through all of you) does for me what I cannot do for myself.

Jeff W. | Maplewood, New Jersey
Grapevine, July 1999



A.A. Around the World

Luck of the Irish

If you're very far from home and desperate enough, finding a meeting in Ireland can be quite remarkable.

Life was good. With 18 months in AA, I was doing what I was supposed to do. Making meetings, being active, doing service and feeling grateful. I was sober and I felt I was ready to make a trip back to Ireland and visit my family. I never told them I was in AA because I still had some shame about being an alcoholic. But I went back and all went well. I felt I didn't need a meeting, and I managed. Nobody had to know anything other than I had just stopped drinking.

That trip went so well, I decided to return about a year and a half later. On this second sober trip, one morning I went down to the local store for a newspaper. As I came out, I saw an old schoolteacher of mine crossing the street heading my way and I emotionally went to pieces. He used to love to physically punish me with his swishing cane, as it came down on my 12-year-old fingers. He would also put his hands on my face. One hand held my face steady and the other hand slapped me

repeatedly. He was brutal and I feared him more than anyone I ever came across.

My emotions scared me that day. I had rushes of anger and rage. I wanted revenge. I was ready to strike out. For some reason, I turned away and returned to the house and stayed in my room all day, confused, not knowing what to do or who to ask for help. I had no AA contacts or information and only a prepaid cell phone. I felt truly alone.

A while back at a New York AA meeting, someone had shared that he'd gone to a meeting in this part of Ireland. He said it was in this town, up on a hill. I'd forgotten about that meeting on the hill until right then. I knew of one hill in town, so I decided to go there. By the time I got there, it was a cold, wet, dark winter night. The hill was badly lit. Nobody was around, not a soul was anywhere to ask. I waited, hoping I might see people going into a house or down to a basement or something. Nobody. I went down the steps to several basements. I knocked. No answer.

It was getting late so I tried one more basement. It had a black wrought iron gate in front of the door. I rang the bell and the door swung open and a lovely young lady in her slip smiled and said hello. I asked her if there was a meeting there. She said, "What kind of a meeting?"

"An AA meeting," I answered. "What is that?" she asked. I said it was a meeting for people who had a drinking problem. She said she had never heard of such a thing. I thanked her for her time and left.

I went back down the hill to the main street. Colored lights, bars, restaurants, clubs, discos—all places where I used to drink. I began to feel powerless and forsaken as I stood at the bottom of the hill in a daze.

Then all of a sudden, I heard people arguing in the house behind me. Their voices got louder. Just then, their front door swung open and a middle-aged couple emerged. The

woman (she might have been a landlady) was shouting at the guy. She said she was sick of his carrying on and he had to stop drinking.

"I can't," he yelled. "Why don't you go to AA?" she asked. "I don't know where it is," he replied.

Without saying another word, she grabbed him by the collar of his long black coat and dragged him up the hill and vanished down into a basement. I walked up slowly in their direction and the lady came back up out of the basement, still angry and unaware of my presence. So I went down the steps and halfway down the drunk guy was coming back up.

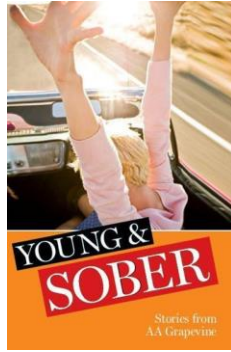
I hope he makes it some day. But I made *my* meeting and I'm still sober. Life is good.

Anonymous

Grapevine, June 2018



BOOK OF THE MONTH



Young and Sober

In this collection of Grapevine stories about the joys and challenges of getting sober at an early age, AA members talk about recognizing their disease even though their drinking may have only lasted a few years. Written by members who got sober in their teens, 20s and 30s, the articles in this book are about growing up young in AA, finding ways to connect when feeling different, getting involved in service and learning how to live a sober life joyously.

Young and Sober is available for purchase at a **special price of only \$10** through the month of July at our Central Office.

People Like Me

A delegate shares her story and stresses the importance of reaching out to the African-American alcoholic.

I was not sober at my first AA meeting and I was not impressed. I saw a bunch of old white guys sitting around a table smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee. It wasn't very inviting. In fact, I don't remember anyone reaching out to say hello to me. I'm not sure if I had been drinking at my second meeting, but I did drink after it.

I went to those meetings to "support a friend," not because of *my* drinking. Which, by the way, was causing me problems. But I wasn't as bad as my friend. Or so I thought. A few years later—homeless, unemployed and blessed with the gift of desperation—I found myself back in the rooms of AA. This time I was there for me.

I arrived via a recovery home, where I was introduced to the Big Book. I was told the program of AA was in the book and if I wanted to learn how to recover from alcoholism, I had better read it.

I didn't know anything about alcoholism, but I knew I didn't want to drink again. So I started reading the book. A couple of times a week they would load us up in a van and head into town for an AA meeting. I went along for the ride, not knowing that I was in for the ride of my life.

I got sober in San Jose, California, in September of 1989, and there were very few black people in the meetings then. I wondered where they were. Was I the only one?

As a newcomer, identification was extremely important for me. First and foremost, I needed to identify as an alcoholic. Secondly, it was comforting for me to see the pamphlet, "A.A. for the Black and African-American Alcoholic" in the literature rack. Seeing this pamphlet told me that even though I was (and still am) often the only black person in the rooms, there was (and still is) a place for me here in AA. For me, outreach to the African-American communities is critical in carrying the message that we can and do recover from alcoholism.

In AA meetings I heard things like, "If you don't take the first drink you won't get drunk," and "I haven't had a drink in two years," and "Think the drink through." Some of these things made sense to me and some did not. I also learned about the



phenomenon of craving, that curious quirk in my body that *demand*s more alcohol once I take that first drink. And the mental obsession that tells me alcohol is the solution, when it's not.

The chapter "The Doctor's Opinion" in our Big Book states: "the body of the alcoholic is quite as abnormal as his mind." I learned how and why I am different from non-alcoholics. As I continued to go to meetings and listened to other alcoholics (sometimes I even talked to them), I began to believe that perhaps there was a way to live without drinking. I wasn't totally convinced, but I was willing to at least give it a try.

The unconditional love I experienced in the Fellowship had a profound effect on me. You see, where I came from, nothing was unconditional. There were strings attached to everything. But AA was different. Members at my group routinely offered and gave me rides to and from meetings. I was invited to coffee after the meeting. They called these events "the meeting after the meeting." At first I would say no, because I was so uncomfortable in my own skin and I didn't have any money. Eventually I did go, and was told not to worry about the money. It was suggested that I could eventually do the same thing for a newcomer when I was able.

Learning to socialize without alcohol was hard. Before AA, I never went anywhere without a drink. Alcohol was my social lubricant. It helped me to loosen up, fit in and be a part of things. It helped ease the sting of racism and homophobia. Members at my group knew what I was going through because I told them. I'm grateful they didn't label my experiences with racism as "outside issues" and they made it OK for me to share my truth about being an African-American alcoholic.

After a while, I started to become willing to change, so at three months sober I found a sponsor and began working the Steps. I was ready for something different, and after spending time in meetings with sober people I began to believe that maybe I could live without alcohol.

In Step One I got honest about my drinking and my inability to control it. I didn't have a problem admitting the unmanageability in my life. Spending time in jail, dumpster diving for a living, losing jobs and having no place to call home took care of that.


I remember hearing old-timers at my group say, "If you don't do the Fourth Step, you'll get drunk." This was a motivating factor for me. Having been convinced that I could not drink successfully ever again, I did my Fourth Step. Step Five was an amazing process of telling another human being my deepest, darkest secrets, (that's what it felt like at the time) my fears, my resentments, how angry I was and why. It was like the release of a huge weight. My sponsor helped me to see my patterns of behavior that were rooted in dishonesty, fear, selfishness, self-pity and other defects of character. I saw how I used resentments to place blame on people, places and things in order to absolve myself of any responsibilities around my drinking, or anything else for that matter.

As we continued working the Sixth through Twelfth Steps, I became willing to practice new behaviors, to work on righting wrongs I'd done to others and to strengthen my relationship with my Higher Power. I began to be OK in this world.

Life without alcohol has been amazing. I still look for people like me in the rooms, people who are struggling to fit in, and try to welcome them. I make myself available to scared newcomers—who don't want to drink again but don't know how to stop—by sharing my experience, strength and hope, with much emphasis on hope.

Today, I'm extremely grateful for AA, the Twelve Steps and the members who took the time to teach me this new way of life. Service in AA has been a huge part of my sobriety. I remain active in General Service and feel it is important for African-American alcoholics to see other alcoholics just like them, not only in the rooms, but also in our service structure. I want them to know they are welcomed and needed to help carry this life-saving message.

By: V.F. | Bend, Oregon.
Grapevine, August 2019



"There is an island of opportunity in the middle of every difficulty."

— Alcoholics Anonymous

SUBMIT YOUR STORY TO GRAPEVINE

Now that many of us have some extra time on our hands, perhaps it is time to share our story in print by submitting it to Grapevine. Here are the topics for upcoming issues as well as submission deadline dates:

□ JANUARY 2021

Oldtimers (stories due July 15, 2020)

Let's hear from our long-time members! What was AA like when you came in? What have you learned over the years? What have been your greatest challenges and joys? Share your stories.

□ FEBRUARY 2021

Sponsorship (stories due Aug 15, 2020)

Share your experiences of sponsoring others (or of being sponsored). What are some of the things you learned? What things do you now pass on? Share your story.

□ MARCH 2021

Making Amends (stories due Sept. 15, 2020)

Did you have a particularly interesting or difficult Ninth Step experiences? How did it go? Any surprises? How did your sponsor help you? How did it change you? Share your story

□ APRIL 2021

Fun in Sobriety (stories due Oct. 15, 2020)

We're not a glum lot. Been on any fun sober trips? How about camping, skiing, skydiving, dancing, collecting, reading, cooking, volunteering? What about service events, new hobbies, game nights, sober vacations? Share your sober adventures! Let's hear from you!

□ MAY 2021

How the Steps Changed My Life (stories due Nov. 15, 2020)

Pick a Step and share your experiences with it. Four? Five? Eight? Eleven? Tell us how that Step changed you and enriched your life. Give examples. Share your stories.

Visit: www.aagrapevine.org/contribute for writing guidelines and to submit (upload) an article.

Grapevine and La Viña are here to help

Due to the current changing health situation, many AA meetings across the U.S. and Canada are finding it safer to close. To help members during this time, we are giving everyone **free access** to all of our 2020 Grapevine and La Viña issues. (The audio to Grapevine's stories will be available as well, so people can listen to the stories if they like.) Please share with your fellows. We have also included a link to our Youtube channel with some original audio stories as well as other important information.

To enter, visit:

www.aagrapevine.org/we-are-here-to-help

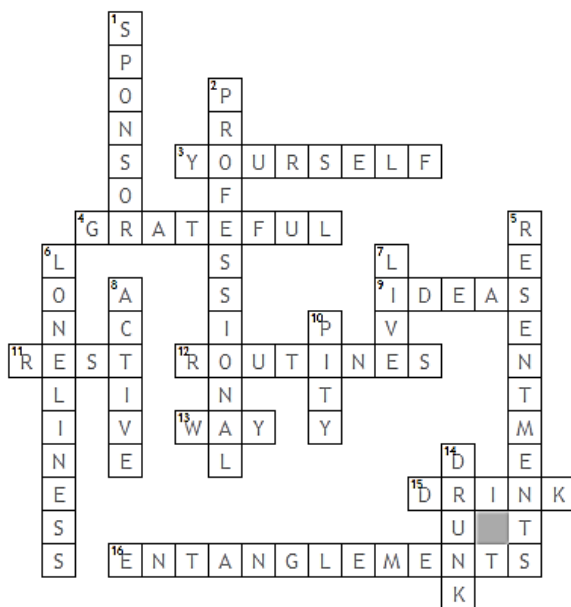
"If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing."

— Alcoholics Anonymous

Came to Believe

1. LEIFEB _____
2. GNEAWNIKA _____
3. OEGRRSPS _____
4. ENOBSOSI _____
5. SRFFAIA _____
6. NRIECPESXEE _____
7. ITFAH _____
8. REPOW _____
9. ERESEAL _____
10. HYILTUMI _____
11. REPARY _____
12. RDESNRERU _____
13. LREACMI _____
14. TPIALIRSU _____

LIVING SOBER CHAPTERS



“I sought my soul, but my soul I could not see. I sought my God, but my God eluded me. I sought my brother, and I found all three. We find our brothers in the Fellowship, and therein lies spiritual strength.”

— Came to Believe

No Defense

Getting sober later in life, with the help of Grapevine and a spiritual awakening.

I was 74 years of age on June 13, 2020 and celebrated seven years of sobriety on June 25, 2020. In January 2013, my oldest daughter suggested that we do our goal books for the year, something she suggests every year. I hated this idea, because I cannot finish, let alone start, goals the way she does. That year I said: "OK, I'll do it." I arrived at her home with my bottle of wine, paper, colored pens, notebook with dividers. My goal was to Become My Best Self by the time I by the time I turn 70, in the categories of mental, spiritual, emotional, financial, physical and psychological. I felt so proud of myself.

The next time I thought of this goal book was February, because I had made a doctor's appointment for a physical, complete with blood tests. When the doctor asked me the usual health questions, I answered truthfully. When she asked if I drank alcohol, I shrank inside yet answered: "Yes, I do." She then asked: "How much?" "Two glasses a day."

And she said: "Don't you think that's a lot?"

Naturally, I did not. "But that's 14 a week" she said. She continued in a raised voice: "Well, when we get together in two weeks to go over your blood work results, you will have to cut that in half or quit all together or I will find help for you."

Before I was out the main building door, I had given up trying to figure out how many bottles of wine I would need for two weeks. I headed straight for my neighborhood store

and filled up all dividers in the case wine box. Some days later, as I was driving down my neighborhood store street, I heard myself say this one complete sentence: "Oh wow! I have stopped drinking, how cool! Oh wait there's my store, I guess I haven't." Hours later, I was unable to get out of my recliner. I hung up on my friend, completely unable to listen to one more word from either of us, too full to eat one more thing to soak up the wine I had in my system so I could drink just one more glass. I next clearly remember sitting at my table, feeling my drunk body, seeing the empty bottle and completely stunned in the knowledge that I had failed to stop drinking. For 50 years I could stop or start as I wished. Not this time. Now the doctor would send me to the mental hospital, and I wouldn't get out. I would receive shock

treatments like my aunt. I would be mentally incompetent from here on.

I started for the bedroom to force myself to die. I couldn't do any of this anymore, nor did I want to. Months later I recalled that I saw myself in the bathroom mirror, which no doubt led me to truly seeing myself. I was scared, terrified and fell on the bed sobbing and begging God to help me. Ever the self-sufficient woman, I told God I was going to open the Big Book and point to a word and please make that word tell me if I am an alcoholic. I opened the book and pointed. "Spiritually bankrupt" was at my fingertip. A rush of breath came out and I surrendered to the truth. I am an alcoholic. Bravely, I sat up and rocked back and forth: "OK God. I am an alcoholic. My name is MaryAnn and I am an alcoholic. Help me, please." The room became quiet. I felt something like calm come over me, and then a ripple of energy travel up or down my spine. I knew that was God, even though we hadn't been friends for decades. I crawled under the covers and slept the whole night.

In the morning, I called my Al-Anon sponsor who wasted no time telling me to leave work in time for a noon AA meeting in the next town. I never craved alcohol after that. I learned this was my bottom, because I surrendered and had a spiritual experience. At the meeting, I sat and watched a dozen women talk to me, without understanding a word until someone said: "Here are The Promises." I also heard: "We will not regret the past." Every fiber of my being woke up and I wanted that. No regret? I would do anything to have that Promise come true.

After three months and 90 meetings, I was having a difficult time retaining what anyone said, but chalked that up to a previous head injury. I restarted the Steps and Traditions and learned why I am an alcoholic and that I was failing to manage my life because of my obsession with alcohol, not because I had a brain injury 30 years prior! I had a second spiritual awakening at Step Three. My sponsor asked me if I knew what the words "build" and "do" meant in the Third Step prayer. I had no idea and was embarrassed I didn't know easy words like that, but then I didn't understand much of anything.

But my sponsor came and sat next to me at the table, held both my hands firmly in hers, and we read together. We spoke the words: "God, I offer myself to Thee – to build with me and to do with me" With those words and her human touch, I was forever rejoined with the human race and with

God. I had no concept of what that involved, I just believed I had found the way I was looking for all my life and I was not going to let it fade away. However, I had a dilemma in that I couldn't retain meeting shares nor relate to people's feelings. It was about that time I bought a subscription to Grapevine and discovered a way to remember and get to know alcoholics. I highlighted paragraphs that I wanted in my life. With my own magazine, I could read as many times as I wanted until something stayed with me and I could relate to the language of sobriety a word, a sentence, a paragraph at a time. I always looked for anyone my age who was a newcomer like me. I found them in my Grapevine. I didn't experience connection with others in real-life meetings for over two years, but each person's story in Grapevine helped me get closer and

closer to recognizing myself and you with love, tolerance and compassion.

I, too, now say I love Alcoholics Anonymous. I understand the need for a Higher Power, meetings, service and talking with another AA member. My spiritual awareness is expanding day by day. Yes, my life is beyond anything I could have imagined or believed. I've been my home group's GSR, and now serve as Corrections Rep—and a young lady asked me to be her sponsor! The changes I especially cherish are my driven human need to make amends when I have hurt someone. I believe in prayer and meditation, and I almost never regret my past!

MaryAnn B. | Tacoma, Wash.
Grapevine, Online exclusive

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Join Us In Our*

2020 Carry The Message Project

Give Grapevine or La Viña To An Alcoholic In Need

2 EASY WAYS!

1. If you know the full name and the mailing address of the recipient:

Give a Gift Subscription to a friend, a sponsee, doctor's offices or for giveaways at anniversaries or events at your homegroup, district, or area level.

Follow these steps:

- Go to store.aagrapevine.org.
- Click on the Gift Subscriptions box.
- Click on the Red Gift Bag icon for the type of gift subscription you want to give.
- Click on "Go to the products page."
- Click on the number of Gift subscriptions you want to purchase (1 gift or 2).
- Enter your information, the recipient's information and your payment information.
- Click on the Process Order button. You're done!

Note: The first renewal notices will be sent to you and if there is no response, the last ones will be sent to the recipient.

2. If you do not know full name and the mailing address of the recipient and want Grapevine to select an alcoholic in need from the requests we have received.

Give a Carry the Message Gift Certificate to someone you do not know (such as an alcoholic in prison).

Follow these steps:

- Go to store.aagrapevine.org.
- Click on the Gift Certificate box.
- Click the Buy button of the appropriate Carry the Message Gift Certificate option and you will be taken to a page showing our quantity discounts (at the bottom).
- Enter the number of gift certificates that you want and click the Buy button. (For multiple gift certificates, the discount will automatically be applied).
- Click Checkout and enter your order and payment information.
- When you click the Confirm button, you will get an order confirmation email and the gift certificate will be sent to you as an individual email.
- Forward the gift certificate to nherron@aagrapevine.org and we will redeem it for someone who has requested a subscription but can't afford one. (If you have purchased multiple gift certificates, select all of them and use the Forward as Attachment option, so you only have to send us one email).

Note: Your information will not be connected to the subscription record and all renewal notices will be sent directly to the recipient.

**San Mateo County Fellowship of Alcoholics
Anonymous
Delegates Committee Meeting Minutes
June 2, 2020 7:30pm This was a Zoom meeting**

The meeting was opened at 7:30 p.m. with the Serenity Prayer.
Delegates must sign in; new business must be submitted in writing.

Julie M. read the Twelve Traditions; and Harry Z. read the Responsibility Statement.

Minutes: The May 2020 minutes were reviewed and approved.

New Delegates: Erin replacing Joan for the Sand Hill group
Connie C. the Women's Group

A.A. Birthdays: Jim 4years, Joan 31years, Louise 10 years

Financial Report: The May 2020 financial report was reviewed and approved.

SERVICE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Bridging the Gap: Tatiana reported that there were not meetings due to the Covid virus. More information can be obtained from Ted B. (650) 583-2935. The BTG committee meets on the first Monday of the month, at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in San Mateo, at 7:30 p.m.

General Service: Matt D., the General Service District Committee Member reported on the activities of District 5. Area 6 Post conference assembly will be held via Zoom on June 6, 2020. At this assembly, we will hear reports on the state of our Area, presentations on the Conference theme, and our report from the Delegate, who will have already returned from the General Service Conference. There will be time for questions. Interpretation in English, Spanish, and ASL will be available.

Unity Day: There will not be a live event. Julie M. stated that it will be voted on at the next meeting that the money allocated for Unity Day be sent to GSO New York, this is \$1,500.00

District 5 Delegate report will be presented at the regular meeting June 16, 2020.

Grapevine: Due to current situation for health reasons the 2020 Grapevine and La Vina issues will be free online.

Visit the website: <http://www.aagrapevine.org/we-are-here-to-help>.

Hospitals & Institutions (H&I): Lori C reported that there are no H&I meetings at this time. There are a couple of Zoom meetings at Our Common Ground.

NCCAA (Northern California Council of A.A.) No report

PENYPAA (Peninsula Young People in A.A.): Camp Kyle reported that there is no activities scheduled at this time but Santa Clara young people are active.

PI/CPC (Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community): Brent reported that all events for the summer are cancelled. September is Recovery month and hopefully there will be events at that time. He further stated that due to illness he is in need of a replacement and that Matt Garcia will be taking his place.

The next meeting will be July 7, 2020 just prior to the Delegates meeting via Zoom

CENTRAL OFFICE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Advisory Committee: The advisory committee held an emergency meeting on May 31 2020. They developed an information / guideline suggestion document for meetings that are preparing to reopen. This document is on the Central Office web site and it is recommended that groups review it before discussing reopening. The document will be revised and updated as needed. Please do not bother facilities about when they will your meeting return and open up, they are trying to get their own functions set. We have had at least two facilities tell the meetings they will not be allowed back. It was moved and passed that the re-opening guidelines will be posted on the Central Web Site aa@aa-san-mateo.org.

Alkathon: Becky reported that we still do not know anything about the Alkathon.

Teleservice: No report

Trusted Servant Workshop: No report

Central Office: Don C. reported that the office is open on Monday and Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm only. There is hard copy of zoom meetings in the May issue of High Sobriety or on the website. He also reported that website is constantly being updated and that we will be looking for a web master to help with all the updates. He further stated that donations are coming in and the office is operating well. He stated that if you are sending in a personal donation please put the name of the group that is should be credited to and if it is for more than one group please note that.

Anniversary Party: Cancelled for 2020

Spanish Central Office: No report.

Sunshine Club: Karen A. reported. They are not doing in person meetings but on-line meetings or calls are going on. The Sunshine Club is always looking for energetic AA Members that are interested in participating and ready to be of service when needed. Please call Edv V. if you need help Coordinator at (650) 222-5582, for more information or e-mail aa@aa-san-mateo.org.

Old Business: none.

New Business: There was a discussion on Zoom meetings and how or if they could continue. There is a possibility a committee could be established to help organize keeping Zoom meetings. If you are interested in helping to organize this please call Don at the Central Office.

Central Office Activity

Twelfth Step Calls: 1 Office Visits: 23
Phone Calls for Information: 116 Website Visits: 14,690
(Note: The above calls were answered during regular business hours)

Meeting Adjourned: 8:43 p.m. **Delegates Present:** 21

Next Meeting: July 7, 2020 Via Zoom 821 8964 3004

**SAN MATEO COUNTY FELLOWSHIP INCOME STATEMENT
JUNE 2020**

	JUN	Total YTD		JUN	Total YTD
Income			Operating Expenses		
Birthday Club Contributions	67.00	591.00	Accounting Services	57.00	406.00
Book sales	330.78	5,330.72	Books Purchased	0.00	7,472.38
Central Office Annual Party	0.00	1,353.82	Chips	40.45	395.81
Chip sales	86.88	736.43	Central Office Annual Party Exp	0.00	500.00
Delegates Collection	0.00	172.00	Central Office Insurance	147.30	885.25
Faithful Fivers	558.30	3,212.45	Credit Card Charges	7.70	94.54
Group Contributions	5,636.00	45,065.06	Employee Insurance	260.00	1,568.00
High Sobriety Subscriptions	10.00	58.00	Miscellaneous	0.00	0.00
In Memoriam	0.00	0.00	Office Equipment Lease & Maint	312.38	1,996.35
Individual Contributions	912.50	11,812.50	Office supplies	317.73	1,346.89
Interest Income	0.00	0.00	Outside Services	0.00	0.00
Other	116.95	116.95	Postage	54.75	609.50
Printing	0.00	71.50	Rent	1,452.00	8,606.00
Sales Tax on Books & Chips	43.84	636.89	Salaries	3,971.42	24,247.75
Tax Refund	0.00	107.02	Sales Tax on books	0.00	503.53
Covid 19 7th Tradition	2,232.78	6,700.41	Taxes (Payroll)	1,626.00	10,296.23
			Telephone & Tech	335.25	1,426.68
			Telephone Advertising	0.00	0.00
Total Income	9,995.03	75,964.75	Teleservice	151.00	906.00
Less Expenses	8,732.98	61,260.91	Travel Expenses	0.00	0.00
			Web Services		0.00
Net Income (loss)	1,262.05	14,703.84			
Starting Balance		45,671.31			
Plus Net Income/Loss		1,262.05			
Ending Balance		46,933.36	Total Operating Expenses	8,732.98	61,260.91
			Net Income (loss)	1,262.05	14,703.84
TOTAL PRUDENT RESERVE		50,013.30	2019 Year-to-Date Summary		
			Year-to-Date Income		75,964.75
			Year-to-Date Expenses		61,260.91
TOTAL CASH POSITION		96,946.66	Year-to-Date Net Inc/(Deficit)		14,703.84

	JUNE	YTD	MENLO PARK	JUNE	YTD	REDWOOD CITY	JUNE	YTD	SAN MATEO	YTD
ATHERTON		700.00	Atherton AA		307.20	A Vision for You		374.55	Bunker Young People	627.85
Sunday Spirituality			Cottonmouth		589.77	Broken Elevator	25.00	280.00	Esto Es AA	25.00
BELMONT			Fri. Noon Women's	19.26	654.44	Complete Abandon Group		181.13	Eye Opener	131.00
Alkie Gulch		85.00	Men's R4D Big Book		276.12	Don't Drink Group		77.00	Fireshide Group	70.20
Belmont Tues. Noon Group	102.15	584.93	Menlo Park Men's Group		80.40	Foundation Stone Group		409.00	Highlanders Grp.	49.48
Day At A Time		557.91	Mon. 12:10 PM Happy Hour		399.16	Mon. Nite Fireshide Chat		232.20	Joy of Living	30.00
Forum	10.00	84.53	Sat Morning Sandhill	779.18	2,553.68	Sun. Nite Sharing		240.00	Lunch Bunch	20.00
One Line at a Time	10.00	210.00	Sat Sunshine Grp MP 7:30		464.98	The Sewer Group		105.00	Mid Peninsula Women	400.60
Singleness of Purpose	25.00	92.50	Tues Noon Book Worm	151.67	171.67	Thumpers		307.53	Monday Night Men's	393.68
			Women's 12- Step Thu Noon	9.48	581.73	Vision for You		33.93	Morning Serenity (All)	1,060.44
BRISBANE						Wed. Woodside Meeting		417.07	San Mateo Forum	313.48
Brisbane Breakfast		530.72	MILLBRAE						San Mateo Group # 1	312.00
			12 Step Study (Tues Noon)		140.08	SAN BRUNO			Sunday Serenity	138.60
BURLINGAME						12 Study Grp (Thurs)		120.19	Sunday Sundowners	60.60
Any Length	53.63	1,137.18	MOSS BEACH			Big Book Study/Fri (5pm)		329.19	Tues Night Beginners	170.00
Back to the World Group	30.00	87.00	Men's Language of the Heart		642.00	Come as You Are	279.00	604.56		
Burlingame Men's Grp	77.94	584.94	Serenity by the Sea		221.27	Daily Reflections		207.30	SOUTH S.F.	259.00
Burlingame Noon Men's Grp	20.00	191.26				Early Enders		92.23	Midway S.S.F. Grp	138.52
Burlingame Read a Passage		26.00	PACIFICA			Experience, Strength, Hope		134.40	New Beginnings	140.00
Ham & Eggers	9.18	865.18	12 @ 6 Group	40.00	60.00	Grupo Serenidad		40.00	South City Womens	
Hillsborough Men's Group	10.00	200.00	12 Noon Disc. (Mon)		238.00	Living Sober/ HH (Tues)	24.00	313.70	Stepping Stones	100.00
Just For Today		294.00	B.Y.O.B. Group		270.00	Milbrae Group	25.00	71.50	WESTBAY ALANO	
Rap Group		271.60	Daily Reflections (Beach Mtg)	195.30	295.30	Spkr/Disc - Happy Hour(Mon)		406.78	Brown Baggers	60.00
Reason to Come to AA		900.00	Fri Discussion Noon	97.50	337.30				Colma Eye Opener	117.43
Senior Focus Group		588.76	Happy Hour (Living Sober)		40.00	SAN CARLOS			Daily Reflect. (Mon)	100.00
Sharing Choices		83.15	Pacifica Discussion (Weds)		204.40	Gifts of Grace Fri Women		198.60	Early Birds Daily Reflection (Weds)	150.00
Tuesday Nite Group	34.00	212.50	Pacifica Men's Group		393.00	Growing Stronger		18.00	Men's no BS	161.70
Twelve Steps Study (Mon)	33.00	133.10	Page 133 Group	266.00	266.00	In Step with Bill		373.00	Mustard Seed	84.00
			Pedro Valley Pacifica		405.06	S.C. Awareness Group	30.00	389.53	Smart Feet BB	222.58
FOSTER CITY			Serenity in Pacifica		177.82	San Carlos Beginners		362.50	Weds High Noon	90.00
Foster City Women (Sat)		12.00	Sun. Afternoon Step		187.68	San Carlos Men's Grp. (Mon)	59.26	1,238.71	Women's Happy Hour	193.97
Friday Noon Big Book	69.26	361.42	Wake Up Wake Up		210.00	SCP-F- all meetings	200.00	1,350.00		
Living Sober Groups (all)	350.00	983.25	Women's Big Book Study	9.48	9.48	Sequoia Recovery Grp	9.48	219.48		
The Text Group	50.00	50.00	Women's Candlelight Grp	24.15	24.15	We Have Recovered Group		590.00		
The Old & the New	110.00	350.83	Women who wear shoes	290.00	400.20	Womens Read & Reflect.	45.68	85.56		
						Womens Read & Reflect.	147.00	296.82		
HALF MOON BAY			PORTOLA VALLEY							
3rd & 11th Step Prayer		412.73	Chips Ahoy		20.00	SAN MATEO ETC.				
Coastside Talkers		50.00	Ladera Mon Nite Group		517.55	Alkathon - Belmont		2,500.00		
Friday Nite Group	653.69	653.69	Portola Valley 11th Step	390.00	830.00	Alkathon - West Bay Alano		200.00		
HMB Happy Hour Group		187.00				Women's Home Grp (traveling)		532.52		
HMB Thurs Womens BB		148.91				Covid-19 7th Tradition		4,467.63		
Last Bam on the Block		230.83								
Sat. Morning Eye-Opener		617.56								
Stone Pine 7AM Meet-M-F	320.00	917.00								
Stone Pine Noon Meet. M-F*	50.00	489.03								

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