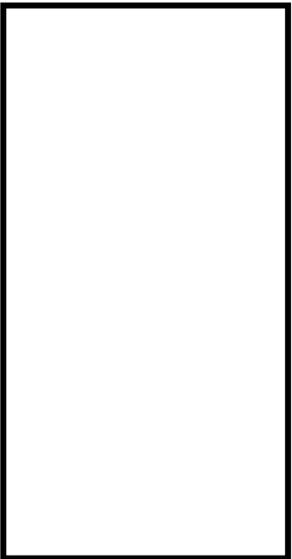




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The “G-d Problem”

I was raised Jewish, a fact that is utterly irrelevant to my alcoholism and to my sobriety, except inasmuch as it sidestepped for me what I call the “G-d problem” when I came into the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous.

By “G-d problem,” I mean that so many people, when they come into the rooms, struggle with the notion of a Higher Power. (I am basing this solely on what I’ve heard from the podium.) Some were raised Catholic or Christian, with a punishing G-d, and somewhere along the way rejected the notion completely. Some lived through tragic or traumatic events and found themselves mired in the age-old quandary, Why do bad things happen to good people? Some are agnostics, or even (gasp) atheists, and can’t stomach even the existence of a deity, let alone the mention of G-d in the steps and the Big Book and the Lord’s Prayer at the end of meetings. I will confess: When I came in, I really struggled with the Lord’s Prayer myself. I certainly didn’t *know* it, for one thing – it being (in my mind at the time and per my upbringing) a “gentile” prayer. I soon realized that there was nothing problematic whatsoever about my reciting it. In fact, after hearing a member do so early in my sobriety, I

now say a slightly different version that resonates with me personally:

“Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth, as it is in Heaven. You give us this day our daily strength, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from fear. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever. Amen.”

My point is that I feel fortunate not to have come in with a thorny concept of G-d, so to speak. Not to say that my concept of G-d, my Higher Power, hasn’t grown and evolved immeasurably. The connection to and relationship with Him that I have today is something I never could’ve imagined – and it is *the* direct result of having a spiritual awakening as *the* result of working the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. That is my experience. My G-d is a G-d of evidence. As our beloved Johnny O. (may he rest in peace) once said about Step Two: “If you need evidence that this program works, just look around the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous.” As the first line of the prologue to the First Edition of the Big Book says, we have recovered from a seemingly

Upcoming COIN Deadlines

March 2017 Issue: February 15th

Topics: Step Three, Tradition Three, Third Step Principle (Faith)

Please email all submissions to coin@aasanjose.org.

The COIN Team

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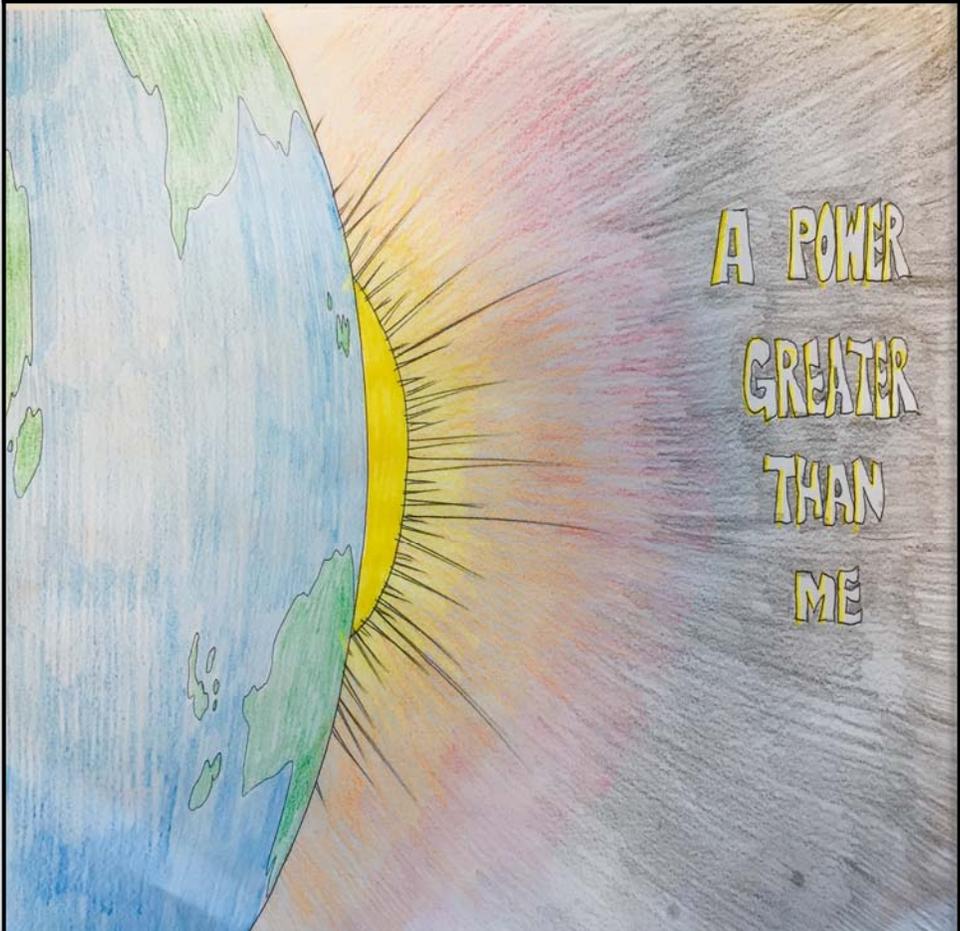
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Godless Sobriety: An Atheist's Point of View

I am an atheist. A sober, alcoholic atheist. I reject god on an ecumenical level as an equal opportunity dissenter. Although I heed the call of love and tolerance, I am indifferent and dismissive of all higher powers, heavens, supreme beings, celestial spirits, empyreal ghosts, supernatural entities, angels, prophets, and religious miracles. I renounce healing crystals, rocks, trees, and oceans as higher powers. I heard once that a door handle can be a higher power. No, it can't. To be fair, I repudiate astral travelers, poltergeists, psychokinesis, channeling the dead, Ouija boards, Lucifer, lower powers, hell, possessions, exorcists, and The Flying Spaghetti Monster as well.

Now that we got that straight, how does an atheist work Step Two and the other god-filled steps? In this piece, I will share how I identified a personal power to help solve my problems. My motivation is NOT to debate or negate anyone's version of god. Conversely, I appreciate there are as many concepts of a higher power as there are people. My motivation is to show other skeptics, humanists, agnostics, and atheists that godless sobriety is divinely practical.

Newcomers often find this an inconceivable proposition and resume their addictions, as I did. It need not be that way for them. My hypocrisy encumbered my ability to stay sober.

I overtly conformed to the "godly" overtone of the steps and program, but covertly shrouded my atheism under the veil of fitting in. I was not true to myself. I was an unwary actor, thrust into an audition ad libitum, to perform under the proscenium arch of recovery. I didn't get the part and I didn't stay sober. I considered recovery groups

like AA Beyond Belief, AA Agnostica, SMART Recovery, and Rational Recovery. Regrettably, besides the lack of meetings, these organizations embody the core principles of which they claim caused their defection from AA. They are separatists. They segregate, not integrate. AA is inclusive, not exclusive.

How does an atheist work Step Two and the other god-filled steps?

So, I found a sponsor and tried to follow good orderly direction. But prostrating myself during the Third-Step prayer felt like poison oak was creeping toward my most tender parts. But I proceeded, because that's what was suggested. I adhered to the Big Book's emphasis on finding a god of my own understanding. That is, until chapter four, which implies how irrational we are to doubt a superintending deity. "Actually we were fooling ourselves, for deep down in every man, woman, and child is the fundamental understanding of God." This persuasive recovery parlance reminded me of the proselytizing "Good News" of which I heard from fundamentalist family members and door-knockers alike. More chicanery, and another intoxicating departure from AA.

But I wanted to stay sober. As an insurance policy to avoid the highway to hell-fire in perpetuity, I placed a Pascal's Wager. Pascal argued that a rational person should live as if god exists, and forgo temporal worldly pleasures in order to receive eternal life in heaven. Tragically,

this bet guarantees a losing hand. Because if there exists the triple-Omni-god, he would know of my inauthenticity. Regardless of my submission and conformity, I would sizzle like a ribeye on Satan's Weber forever. I might as well devolve and enjoy life as a debaucherous wretch. But that wasn't an appealing option either. My only choice was to transform how I viewed the paradigm of recovery if I earnestly desired lasting sobriety, happiness, and relationships – but without god.

First, I got a new sponsor, who inquired, "Are you the most important being in the universe?" "No!" I admitted. "I am one of the smallest beings. Galactically speaking, I barely exist. My existence is a spark between the vacuity before birth, and the void upon my death."

"And you believe there is a power outside yourself?" I agreed. "OK. I can work with that."

Second, we augmented the steps and literature to eliminate all forms or pronouns of god and a higher power. The Big Book avows, "We have ceased fighting anything or anyone – even alcohol." Like alcohol, we need not fight the concept of god or a higher power if we don't have that "fundamental understanding." Simply dismiss "The God Thing." Fugettaboutit!

Third, I had to create my own inspirational, yet godless, power if I sought permanent sobriety. I am not Theist, Deist, or Pantheist, so who was I to be? How could I define my power? When I drank and used, my sole purpose was to stay anesthetized, unaccountable to myself and others, unable to work and function. My purpose was to feed my addictions with not only substances, but pride, greed, gluttony, envy, lust, gluttony,

anger, and sloth. Yes, I overindulged on gluttony. (It's not a typo.) I had no purpose. I was detached. I was a Me-ist.

In contrast, I named that power my "Higher Purpose." With Purpose, I am connected. With Purpose, I am a We-ist. I can do all things with Purpose that strengthens me. My purpose is to be humble not prideful, generous not greedy, temperate not gluttonous; complimentary not envious, loving not lustful, peaceful

I named that power my "Higher Purpose."

With Purpose, I am connected.... Outing myself as an atheist in AA was a liberating act. Staying true to my disbelieving self makes me fully responsible for my sobriety.

not angry, and ambitious not slothful. With Purpose, I utilize my strengths in the service of others in the program, in my personal endeavors, and in my professional interactions. Outing myself as an atheist in AA was a liberating act. Staying true to my disbelieving self makes me fully responsible for my sobriety. I believe that within every man, woman, and child are fundamental morals, ethics, and virtues that deteriorate with addiction. I have faith in our collective healing, but not faith healers. I don't participate in meeting prayers. Instead, I mediate and visualize with our hands clasped in unity. Without god, I purposefully practice mindfulness, loving kindness, empathy, equanimity, and compassion.

– Clint G.

Love & Tolerance: God and Religion in AA

So I was at a meeting not so long ago. The topic was the Third Step. A member came up to share, and she was so excited that she had finally come to believe in a Higher Power. And then she said, “My sponsor told me, “Religion is for people who don’t want to go to hell; spirituality is for people who have been to hell.”

I’ve heard this before, and I get what it is trying to say. Basically, we don’t need religion to have a spiritual connection. However, at an AA meeting, is it appropriate? In a way, it is saying that people who are religious don’t get spirituality. I am religious – and spiritual – and trust me, I’ve been through a special kind of hell.

My immediate reaction was anger, I think because many Christians believe in hell and spend their lives trying to lead a good life in hopes of being able to spend eternity beside God after they die. Many, including many in AA, believe that life in the human form is just a small part of their eternity – cleaning up their wreckage, living the Steps, practicing AA’s principles along with practicing their religion is their way of ensuring this. Who are we to judge this?

Despite my first reaction, that comment literally made me cry on the way home. I’m honestly happy for this girl. I’ve watched her come in and struggle up until now. She seemed to finally be in a good place.

At this point in my sobriety, someone else’s idea of their Higher Power has no effect on my own recovery. But what about the newcomer? I would hate to see a dying newcomer leave AA because they thought that they wouldn’t be accepted because they are religious.

Early in sobriety, I listened to a share from a member who casually mentioned that he is a Christian and now attends

church on Sundays. He didn’t go into any detail, and he certainly did not suggest that anyone should go to church. It was merely a statement. After the meeting, another member approached him and told him that he shouldn’t mention that he is a Christian in an AA meeting. For a while after this, I was hesitant in pursuing going back to religion, because I was in fear of what AA would think.

This just isn’t how I was “raised” in AA. I was raised to be open-minded and tolerant. Someone told me recently that in AA, with regard to the idea of a Higher Power, no one is right or wrong. Hell, if atheism keeps you sober, and you can make it work for you, then I’m happy for you. It makes no difference to me if your Higher Power is nature, or if you connect to your Higher Power through daily yoga. Some of us can’t describe our Higher Power; some of us call it God – not necessarily because we have ever picked up a Bible, but because it’s just easier. Some of us are Jewish, some follow Buddha, others are Muslim.

I have briefly shared this with other trusted members of AA. Someone reminded me that I need to be of service, and that NOT going to a meeting just because of a few people’s opinions is not being of maximum service. Initially, when we are new, we tend to lean on the people who have what we want. Someone reminded me that I need to keep going to meetings, and from time to time, share that I am a Christian, just in case there’s a newcomer who might connect with me after the meeting.

On the flip side of all this, I have a friend who is an atheist in AA. He shared that he has experienced similar prejudice for his beliefs. Of course, none of this

should happen within AA. In a perfect world, we could all coexist with a million different ideas of what a Higher Power is. But we are only human. Maybe it's my own insecurity that makes me hesitant to share with other AAs that I am a Christian. Deep down, I fear that I will be rejected, treated differently, judged, or shamed. I fear that I don't fit the "Young Person in AA mold."

Today, because of AA, I have faith in a Higher Power whom I call Jesus Christ. This is MY experience and mine only. I would never push my very personal beliefs

on a sponsee or any other member of AA. My job as a sponsor is to take another alcoholic through the Steps and to let them find their OWN understanding of a Higher Power. My own sponsor is not a religious person. She has her own way of connecting with her Higher Power. Not once has she discouraged me from going back to religion and going back to church to worship despite our differences.

What she did push on me is that love and tolerance is our code. Period.

– Melissa B.

Step Two: A Logical Alternative to Powerlessness

I've been clean and sober just over three years. My Big Book is falling apart at the seams, with smudged pencil marks circling key phrases and notes in the margin. Despite (or perhaps because of) that, I find it fascinating that repeated readings of the Big Book can reveal to me hidden insight.

Step Two tells us that we "came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." In doing Step One, we determined that we were powerless over alcohol. I believe that to my core. There is no doubt in my mind of that fact. Therefore, it must be true that the only power that can mitigate or relieve my alcoholism must exist outside of myself. After all, I am powerless in that area of my life. Hence the power *must* come from elsewhere. At this point, it doesn't even matter where. The key is that it's not me!

Writing this, I see how undeniable this fact is. About two and a half years ago, I absolutely did come to believe that my restoration to sanity required a Power greater than myself. Reading page 45 of the Big Book, 1,109 days after my last drink, I have come to believe it yet again. "Lack of power, that was our dilemma," says Bill W.

"We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves." This is simplicity itself.

This issue of *The COIN* includes a section that discusses various members' concepts of God. I would contend that for Step Two, *all of that is irrelevant*. Provided you do not answer "me" when asked who your God is, you are fine. It is important to come to grips with your own personal definition of God. But I recommend that none of us get too hung up on that for the purposes of Step Two. I am certainly not God, and I am powerless over alcohol, so it is obvious that some power other than myself is the key to achieving sanity.

One final point. Insanity is not the actions we do when we're drunk. Non-alcoholics do foolish things while under the influence as well. Insanity is the fact despite the horrendous consequences (including our rage, remorse, shame, emptiness, etc.), we continue to drink. Insanity comes with the decision to pick up that first drink. We are powerless. Hence the power lies elsewhere. Therein lies the key to Step Two.

– JD D.

In AA, We Don't Have to Understand God to Know

I came into AA bankrupt in every department. When I started to work the steps, my first big challenge was to find a power greater than myself that could solve my problems. What an order for a guy described in Step Two in the 12x12 as the one who had tried religion and found it wanting. I could see the examples of people around me who seemed to have it figured out, and I became a nuisance trying to corner them to get them to explain to me how they do it; they had as much trouble explaining it as I did.

One day, I confronted my friend and asked him to let me in on the secret. Frustrated, he asked, "Do you want to drink right now"? My answer was "NO." He then asked me, "Did you want to drink a year ago"? And my answer was "YES." Next he asked me, "What made the difference?" My answer was that I was influenced by the AA program. His next question was, "Do you have any problem calling that God?" WOW! What a concept.

I have never wanted a drink since I entered the program, and the only answer I could come up with was the influence of AA in my life. For a guy who couldn't conceive of a day without alcohol to transform into a guy who has never wanted a drink since – that was all I needed to know about God. I wish I could tell you who or what God is, but I can't. I can, however, tell you what God does for me... but I'll get to that later.

The second appendix in the big book, "Spiritual Experience," says that there are many examples of spiritual experiences, and that they come in different forms. They can be of the "burning bush" variety, or simply be a psychic change

sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism. I like to believe that my spiritual experience came in the form of *a profound change of perception*. When it occurred to me that all of my thinking was flawed and that I was finally in an environment where I could – with the help of the group – start to follow simple unselfish guidelines that would restore my self esteem and put me at peace with myself and others, I started this wonderful journey, and I've never had it so good. These universal truths are common in all philosophies, and I must seek them out if I want to heal.

I pray to God every day, even though I don't know who or what God is. My mind is not sophisticated enough to understand God, and I'm not sure that God hears my prayers, but *I hear my prayers* and that, I believe, puts me in the best possible attitude I can have about the issue I pray for. My prayers are always the same. I pray for knowledge of His will for me and strength to carry it out, i.e., "God, Please show me what to do and give me the strength to do it, I don't do to well on my own." I often knew what to do, but wasn't always strong enough to do what was right. Today I'm stronger.

Who or what is God? I'm not sure anyone can define God. As another friend of mine explained, "You don't have to understand thermodynamics to enjoy the warmth of the sun." I do, however, know what God does. When I ask for guidance, I become a better receiver and I hear the answers that used to pass right over my head when I thought I had all the answers. I thank God for an open mind.

– Rick R.

What is God to this AA? Good Orderly Direction

God is a force of goodness in the universe that I can learn to cooperate with.

There is a compass in me that can attune itself to the direction and flow of that force of goodness.

I am heartened to know that an airplane is only on perfect course 1% of the time; because of crosswinds and turbulence, it is off course 99% of its journey. The pilot – or auto-pilot – is constantly correcting the course.

I envision God's plan for me as though it is laid out on a topographical map. It has its highs and its lows, its elevations and its depressions; there are clear pathways and flowing streams.

There is a route for me that is God's plan. My free will gives me the choice to

follow this plan, or divert from it. The further off course I go, the more distorted my thinking becomes, the more I suffer painful consequences, and the harder it is to get back into alignment.

My prayer today is not to be perfect; it is to notice sooner and get back on course quicker so I don't

have to hurt others and myself as much.

When I am attuned to God's will for me, I self-correct — almost like being on auto-pilot – and I flow in love, light, laughter, and purpose.

–C.K.



Concept Two: Be It Therefore Resolved

There are a couple of small treasures buried in the middle of your GSR's service manual. One is the Resolution, passed at our 1955 International Convention, that approved the General Service structure that guides our corporate servants in New York. The other is the Conference Charter, which actually defines that structure. By "treasures," I mean that reading them will probably change you. And by "small," I mean that you can do it in about 15 minutes.

Here are a couple of tips, if you're considering it. First, the service manual includes both the original Charter and the current Charter, which has been significantly modified since 1955. I'd suggest reading the current version, which describes the system we have today.

Second, don't read all four pages in order, because there's no overview and the information will be hard to absorb. Instead, first read the headings a few times. They mention things like GSRs, area assemblies, delegates, and the annual Conference in New York. Read them until you know that the Charter is just a thorough definition of the General Service structure, and more or less a set of rules for it. Then read the "articles" (i.e., short sections) in any order you like, and they'll make perfect sense.

Fair warning: In our

service literature, the word "Conference" has several meanings. It can mean the annual week-long business meeting in New York, or the roughly 135 people who attend it, or the entire service structure from New York to the participating groups. So wherever it appears, ask yourself which of those makes the most sense, or if it means all three?

When you get to Article 12 of the Charter (yes, there are 12 articles, a huge surprise), it'll look familiar. It's just Concept 12, that is, the "Six Warranties" (discussed in the December 2015 issue of *The COIN*). This is protected text, just like the Traditions and, since 1976, the Steps. The rest of the Charter has been amended multiple times, but this 12th article, like the Steps and Traditions, can only be changed by – well, you'll see when you read it. Changing those, that's something we don't delegate.

After the somewhat dry Conference Charter, you may enjoy reading the six-paragraph Resolution that made the Charter official. You've seen two of the paragraphs before, so it'll be a very quick read, starting with these dramatic words: "We, the members of the Twentieth Anniversary Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous, here assembled at St. Louis in July of 1955, declare..." This may seem like a long way of getting



around to Concept Two, which is a simple, well, concept: Concept One gave the groups all responsibility and authority for our services, but since 65,000 groups can't manage our business in any practical sense, we delegate that responsibility and authority to the Conference. It's the Conference's job to provide guidance to our corporate trustees, the way Bill and Bob did in the early days. The Conference gives voice to our collective group conscience. That's it, that's Concept Two. We delegate.

If you do feel that this article

meandered unnecessarily, I'd ask you to forget all that other stuff and just read Concept Two in its long form, which goes like this:

When, in 1955, the AA groups confirmed the permanent charter for their General Service Conference, they thereby delegated to the Conference complete authority for the active maintenance of our world services and thereby made the Conference – excepting for any change in the Twelve Traditions or in Article 12 of the Conference Charter – the actual voice and the effective conscience for our whole Society.

– Jim F.

Reprinted from the February issue of *The COIN*

Tradition Two: Organizational Theory and Practice

The essence of Tradition Two is that our fellowship is self-governed with a conscious and intentional lack of structure leading to fluid and dynamic structural stability. Let me explain. Paraphrasing, this tradition states that we are governed by our group conscious. The tradition goes on to explain that whereas we have “leaders,” they are really “servants.” A parallel can be found in a business concept by the name of Self-Directed Work Teams (SDWTs)

Not coincidentally, the 1950s saw a British scientist by the name of Eric Trist lead a movement in the field of Organizational Development that lashed out against the top down management approach favored by folks like Henry Ford. His principles led to a the concept of SDWTs. Essentially, such a team rallies behind a common mission and, within some guidelines, allows the team to be responsible for both the outcome and processes associated with their work. Organizations as diverse as Proctor & Gamble and the Mayo Clinic have used SDWTs to accomplish their respective

missions.

Clearly, Tradition Three and Step One make up the “mission” of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are unwavering in our desire to stop drinking and then stay stopped. The steps form the foundation for our recovery program, but the precise paths are endless. Our meetings bear many similarities, but there are, in fact, many differences. In Taiwan, the meetings are adamant about the anonymity, likely due to culture norms. In Germany, the meetings are set up for an individual to kick off the meeting with a problem that he or she is facing and the group to empathize through stories of commonality and potential solutions.

Those are personal experiences of mine, but I am certain that within the United States, California, and even the Bay Area, we could find different AA SDWTs. Each AA fellowship determines how said group will be run, and these groups are constantly evolving. However, all have that common mission of sobriety through abstinence and personal growth.

– JD D.

AA Traditions Checklist

These questions were originally published in the Grapevine in conjunction with a series of articles on the Twelve Traditions that ran from November 1969 to September 1971. They continue to have great relevance and we hope you find them helpful. The complete "Traditions Checklist" is available at Central Office. We will continue to publish a tradition each month for the rest of 2017.

Tradition One:

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.

1. Am I in my group a healing, mending, integrating person, or am I divisive? What about gossip and taking other members' inventories?
2. Am I a peacemaker? Or do I, with pious preludes such as "just for the sake of discussion," plunge into argument?
3. Am I gentle with those who rub me the wrong way, or am I abrasive?
4. Do I make competitive AA remarks, such as comparing one group with another or contrasting AA in one place with AA in another?
5. Do I put down some AA activities as if I were superior for not participating in this or that aspect of AA?
6. Am I informed about AA as a whole? Do I support, in every way I can, AA as a whole, or just the parts I understand and approve of?
7. Am I as considerate of AA members as I want them to be of me?
8. Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility?
9. Do I go to enough AA meetings or read enough AA literature to really keep in touch?
10. Do I share with AA all of me, the bad and the good, accepting as well as giving help of fellowship?

Tradition Two:

For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

1. Do I criticize or do I trust and support my group officers, AA committees, and office workers? Newcomers? Old-timers?
2. Am I absolutely trustworthy, even in secret, with AA Twelfth Step jobs or other AA responsibilities?
3. Do I look for credit in my AA jobs? Praise for my AA ideas?
4. Do I have to save face in group discussion, or can I yield in good spirit to the group conscience and work cheerfully along with it?
5. Although I have been sober a few years, am I still willing to serve my turn at AA chores?
6. In group discussions, do I sound off about matters on which I have no experience and little knowledge?

Remembering AA's First Archivist, Nell Wing

February marks the ten-year anniversary of the passing of Bill W.'s longtime secretary and AA's first archivist Nell Wing.

In 1947, Nell arrived in New York City, having served in the U.S. Coast Guard during World War II. She was in her late twenties at the time, and was planning to go to Mexico to pursue a career in sculpture. She accepted a temporary job at the Alcoholic Foundation (later the AA General Service Office, or GSO) to earn a little more money for the trip. In 1950, she became Bill's secretary.

Nell was close with Bill and his wife, Lois, frequently visiting them on weekends at Stepping Stones, the couple's home in Bedford Hills, NY, to help Bill with correspondence or research, or just to keep him and Lois company.

Nell said that Bill could be adamant about what he knew had to be accomplished. He had the vision to see ahead what was needed in order to preserve the fellowship, but everybody liked to argue with Bill, and he liked to argue, too. "Listening to Bill was some experience. When Bill would be talking, say at a banquet, many in the audience would be very moved and even weeping at what and how he shared," Nell once recalled. "He could touch you in ways that were really remarkable."

She said the following about Dr. Bob:

"Dr. Bob, as a doctor, believed in being cautious and advising people how to evaluate ideas and solutions,

to weigh them carefully – to have everyone in agreement before taking action."

With regard to Bill and Lois not having children, Nell said that they wanted children, but that Lois had had three unsuccessful pregnancies in the 1920s. They had wanted to adopt, Nell said, but Lois was told that it would be unwise due to Bill's drinking.

Nell said that "Bill liked to read about different interpretations of what God was like. He was very philosophical and William James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience* was very meaningful to him, as it was to many members of AA in those early years.

After Bill died in 1971, Nell continued her close association with the General Service Office and with Lois. She organized the AA Archives, and in 1993 published a memoir called *Grateful to Have Been There*.

Nell retired from the General Service Office in 1982. She never made it to Mexico.



February 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>4</p> <p>SECRETARY WORKSHOP: 10am, Central Office, 274 E. Hamilton Ave., Suite D., Campbell</p>			<p>1</p> <p>OUTREACH MEETING: 6:45pm INTERGROUP MEETING: 7:30pm Trinity Church, 3151 Union Ave., SJ</p>			
<p>5</p> <p>PI/CPC WORKSHOP: 5:30pm, PI/CPC MEETING: 6pm, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 1224 N. Winchester Blvd. at Tulip, SC</p>	<p>6</p> <p>SOUTH COUNTY GENERAL SERVICE WORKSHOP: 7pm, 1st Congregational Church, 1980 Hamilton Ave., SJ</p>	<p>7</p> <p>NORTH COUNTY GENERAL SERVICE MTG: 7:30pm St. John's Lutheran Church, 581 E. Fremont Ave., Sunnyvale</p>	<p>8</p> <p>OUTREACH MEETING: 6:45pm INTERGROUP MEETING: 7:30pm Trinity Church, 3151 Union Ave., SJ</p>	<p>9</p> <p>SCCIPAA 12pm - 1pm Calvary Church</p>	<p>10</p> <p>SCCIPAA 12pm - 1pm Calvary Church</p>	<p>11</p> <p>SCCIPAA 12pm - 1pm Calvary Church</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>DIVERTER/12TH STEPPERS WORKSHOP: 10am, Central Office, 274 E. Hamilton Ave., Suite D., Campbell</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p>BRIDGING THE GAP MTG: 7pm, 1st Congregational Church, 1980 Hamilton Ave. at Leigh, SJ Central Office Closed</p>	<p>21</p> <p>SOUTH COUNTY GENERAL SERVICE MEETING: 7pm, 1st Congregational Church, 1980 Hamilton Ave., SJ</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>SCCIPAA 12pm - 1pm Calvary Church</p>
<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>H&L COMMITTEE MEETING: 7pm, 1980 E. Hamilton Ave., SJ</p>				

March 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 OUTREACH MEETING: 6:45pm INTERGROUP MEETING: 7:30pm Trinity Church, 3151 Union Ave., SJ	2	3	4 SECRETARY WORKSHOP: 10am, Central Office, 274 E. Hamilton Ave., Suite D., Campbell
5 P/CPC WORKSHOP: 5:30pm, P/CPC MEETING: 6pm, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 1224 N. Winchester Blvd. at Tulip, SC	6	7 SOUTH COUNTY GENERAL SERVICE WORKSHOP: 7pm, 1st Congregational Church, 1980 Hamilton Ave., SJ	8 NORTH COUNTY GENERAL SERVICE MTG: 7:30pm St. John's Lutheran Church, 581 E. Fremont Ave., Sunnyvale	9	10	11 SCCPAA 12pm - 1pm Cahvary Church
12	13	14	15	16	17	18 DIVERTE/12 TH STEPPERS WORKSHOP: 10am, Central Office, 274 E. Hamilton Ave., Suite D., Campbell
19	20 BRIDGING THE GAP MTG: 7pm, 1st Congregational Church, 1980 Hamilton Ave. at Leigh, SJ Central Office Closed	21 SOUTH COUNTY GENERAL SERVICE MEETING: 7pm, 1st Congregational Church, 1980 Hamilton Ave., SJ	22	23	24	25 SCCPAA 12pm - 1pm Cahvary Church
26	27 H&I COMMITTEE MEETING: 7pm, 1980 E. Hamilton Ave., SJ	28				



January 2017 Statistics

Daytime Phone Calls to Central Office.....**254**

Daytime 12-Step Calls.....**4**

(Evening 12-Step call information is not available.)

The Central Office website receives an average of 15,000 hits each month!

I AM RESPONSIBLE...

WHEN ANYONE, ANYWHERE,

REACHES OUT FOR HELP,

I WANT THE HAND OF AA

ALWAYS TO BE THERE.

AND FOR THAT:

I AM RESPONSIBLE.

To all the members and groups who support us,

MEETING CHANGES

NEW

12 & 12 Women's Discussion: Wednesday, 10:30 a m, Foothills Church, 8335 Church St., Gilroy

CHANGED

Living Solutions: Friday, 2500 Masonic Center, San Jose, **Now meets at 8 pm**

Bottoms Up: Thursday, 6 pm, Home First 2011 Little Orchard St, San Jose, **Now meets at 6:30 pm on Saturday**

TGIF: Friday, 6 pm, Gilroy Groups, 7511 Gourmet Alley, Gilroy **Now meets at 7:30 pm**

Early Fresh Start: Saturday, 10 am, Oak Grove Church: 479 Blossom Hill Rd., **Now meets in Room 203, upstairs**

Palo Alto Group: Friday, 7:30 p m, **Now meets at: Mitchell Park Library, 3700 Middlefield Rd., Palo Alto**

NO LONGER MEETING

New Peoples Group: Sunday, 8pm, First United Methodist Church, 1675 S. Winchester, at Hamilton, San Jose

We Can Stop in Time: Friday, 8 pm, Gilroy Groups, 7511 Gourmet Alley, Gilroy

Step by Step Group: Sunday, 8:15 pm, Union Presbyterian Church, 858 University Ave., Los Altos

Downtowner Group: Sunday, 7:30 pm, Spiritual Progress Group, Neighbor Center, 208 E. Main St. & Fiesta Way, Los Gatos

West Valley Retreads Step Study: Monday, 6:00 pm, Los Gatos Recovery Center, 16400 Lark Ave., Suite 350, Los Gatos

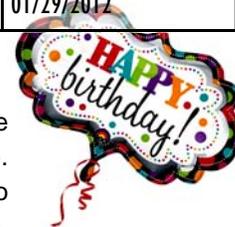
Birthday Contributions



Birthday Celebrant	Years	Contributions	Birthday
Kim S.	16	Carol B.	01/01/2001
Dave K.	4	John S.	01/01/2013
Chris H.	17	John S.	01/01/2000
Tommy O.	10	John S.	01/01/2007
Kevin F.	5	Stephanie L.	01/02/2012
Brenda M.	3	Julie K.	01/02/2014
Donna B.	3	Julie K.	01/02/2014
Mary Mc.	33	Mary Mc.	01/06/1984
Louie R.	26	Abe G.	01/08/1991
Paul C.	38	Robbie, Paul C.	01/10/1979
Barbara Z.	3	Barbara Z.	01/14/2014
Tom K.	47	Tom K.	01/15/1970
David R.	25	David R.	01/16/1992
Ben N.	10	Anonymous	01/18/2007
Bob S.	54	Bob S.	01/24/1963
John S.	25	John S.	01/25/1992
Mary P.	34	Mel & Daffy, Mary P.	01/28/1983
Colette	5	Julie K	01/29/2012

392 Years of Sobriety!

If you would like to participate or to honor a friend, please use the birthday forms at your meeting or at Central Office. Birthdays are listed in recognition of contributions made to Central Office on a member's behalf for a sobriety milestone,



INTERGROUP MEETING MINUTES

January 4, 2017

- Robby W., Intergroup Chairperson, opened the meeting at 7:30 pm followed by a moment of silence and the Serenity Prayer. Greg read the definition of Intergroup. Hatch read the Twelve Traditions.
- New Intergroup Reps:
 - Brenda M. – Winchester Fellowship, Santa Clara
 - Kevin W. – Winchester Fellowship, Santa Clara
 - Paul – Character Defects, Campbell
 - Efran A. – ODAAT, San Jose
 - Mark S. – Gathered Together for Sobriety, San Jose
 - Leslie C. – Spiritual Step Study, Palo Alto
 - Laurie – Big Book, Los Altos
 - Mary M. – Happy Destiny, Los Gatos
 - David C. – Downtown Steppers, San Jose
 - Hatch C. Gay & Lesbian Sober Experience, San Jose
- Visitors
 - Janet
 - Jamie
- Birthdays
 - Brenda, 3 years
 - Tommy, 10 years
 - Janet, 30 days
- Observation of 7th Tradition – Michael H.
- Corrections or Additions to the Agenda and the Previous Month's Minutes – (none)
- Treasurer's Report, Michael H.

	7th Tradition	Rent	ICO	Coffee	Balance
YTD					
2015	1230		600	500	191 (64)
64					
2016	1185		600	570	15 0
64					

 - Prudent Reserve = 300
 - Balance Forward 2016 = 64
 - Coffee for 2016 was generously provided by a person who wishes to remain anonymous.
 - Thank you!
 - Tonight's collection: \$107
- 56 voting members present

Reports

Intergroup Chair, Robby W.

- Happy new year! Desiree, thank you for the coffee! Thanks to Larry H. for setting up and taking down our PA system. Also, big thank you to Larry P. for bringing our PA system from storage to Intergroup and returning it.
- This year starts off with the hand-off the Secretary's workshop from General Service to Intergroup. In doing so, I have added the Secretary Workshop to our monthly agenda, so

we will be hearing from Kathy R. after the Nights & Weekends Diverter report.

- As a reminder, please line up three deep for the committee reports and be sure to highlight your “take away”.

Central Service Board Chair, Darcy

- December 22, 2016 meeting report for month ending November 30, 2016:
 - Group Contributions: down for November as reported at the last Intergroup Meeting:
 - November 2015 vs. November 2016: down 7.2k (-58%)
 - November 2016 vs. October 2016: down sequentially 12.4k (-70%)
 - YTD as of December 22, 2016: still up approximately 30k (22.4%), so November appears to just be a slow month dip rather than a systemic issue.

12th Step Committee, Alex S.

- 12-Steppers: volunteers needed. This is a two-year service commitment with a six-month sobriety requirement.
- Workshops are held the third Saturday of each month at 10am at Central Office. If you're interested but cannot attend, please contact Alex to arrange a workshop 30 minutes before or after your meeting.

Nights and Weekends Diverter Coordinator, Julie (Dominic not present)

- The Diverter is the nights and weekend portion of the 24/7 telephone outreach by Central Office. We take calls from people contacting AA, answer their questions and/or find a 12-Step volunteer to work with them. The sobriety requirement is one year, with a one-year service commitment.
- Invite members to attend the Diverter Workshop on the third Saturday at 10am at Central Office, or 7pm before Intergroup meeting.
- New volunteers are needed, or we will have to have current volunteers double up on their shifts. There are four shifts open:
 - 3rd Monday, 7-11pm
 - 3rd Tuesday, 10:30pm – 6am
 - 3rd Wednesday, 6-9am
 - 3rd Wednesday, 4:30pm-7pm

Secretary Workshop, Julie (Kathy not present)

- Workshop on the first Saturday at 10am at Central Office.
- Encourage members with or considering secretary positions to attend.

Outreach Committee, Susan P.

- Please join us at before next month Intergroup at 6:45pm to help kick off 2017 and brainstorm on getting meetings without an Intergroup Rep. some representation at Intergroup.

The COIN, Stephanie

- The topic for the February issue is Step 2, Tradition 2, and the principle of hope. Articles are due no later than January 18. Look for the new opinion section on page 12.

Website, Josh R.

- Josh attended the National AA Technology Workshop (NAATW) conference in Winston-

February 2017

Salem, NC, in November. In addition to the WordPress and app work being done in Santa Clara, the hot topic at NAATW was how groups can begin to accept electronic 7th Tradition contributions in meetings. App services such as Venmo, PayPal, Square, and Tilt are under discussion. San Francisco's Intergroup has a technology committee that is developing a handbook to educate groups on the benefits and hazards of these new services. Josh attends their meetings, and will make sure we get a copy when it's ready.

Activities Committee, Ken (no report)

Old/Ongoing Business – none

New Business – none

Other Service Committee Reports

Unity Day 2016, Greg C. – (none)

NCCAA (no report)

PI/CPC (no report)

Hospitals & Institutions, Tommy O.

- Volunteers are needed, including especially Spanish-speakers. Please encourage members to register for H&I.
- Meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday at 7pm at First Congregational Church, 1980 E. Hamilton Avenue in San Jose.
- Please take your lists to your meetings. Two years of sobriety is required.
- There are services that will require security clearance as well.

Bridging the Gap, Jane

- Volunteers are needed. Meetings are held the third Monday of each month at 7pm at First Congregational Church, 1980 E. Hamilton Avenue in San Jose.

North County General Service, Mary M.

- Starting a new panel that runs for two years. This is a good time to check with your group and see if you have a GSR. If your group does not, now would be a good time to get one. There is a two-year service commitment, and a two-year sobriety requirement. If you start soon, you would have plenty of time to get up to speed with the General Service Conference process.
- If you or anyone in your group is interested in being a GSR but has questions, please contact Mary at the number listed on the agenda.

South County General Service, Nicco

- GSR Workshops are held the third Tuesday of each month at 7pm at First Congregational Church, 1980 E. Hamilton Avenue in San Jose. Dinner is served at 6:30pm, all are welcome.

SCCYPAA, Dana (no report)

Sober and Free, Linda

~~The LGBTQ Conference is on April 7-9 at the Hyatt in downtown San Jose.~~

- A fundraiser ("Switch Hitters") with a drag show is being held on March 4 at the Center for Spiritual Living, 1195 Clark Street in San Jose (see flyer on page 24)

Save the Dates!

CHILI COOK-OFF

March 18, 2017 12:00-3:00



OLD TIMERS MEETING

August 6, 2017 1:30-3:00



TAKE YOUR SPONSOR TO BRUNCH

October 7, 2017 11:30-3:00



Service positions are available.
Please contact Central Office.
(408) 374-8511

LOCAL EVENTS

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| February 13 | Be Your Own Valentine Party, 5 to 6:30 pm, Saturday Nite Live, 2634 Union Avenue, San Jose |
| March 4 | Switch Hitters All-Inclusive Drag Show, 6:30 pm, Center for Spiritual Living, 1195 Clark Street, San Jose www.soberandfree.org |
| March 10-12 | NCCAA Spring Conference, Crowne Plaza Hotel, 1221 Chess Drive, Foster City |
| March 18 | Agenda Topics Workshop, noon to 3:30 pm, The Alano Club of San Jose, 1122 Fair Avenue, San Jose |
| March 18 | Chili Cook-Off, noon to 3 pm, Lincoln Glen Church, |

February 2017

INTERGROUP CENTRAL OFFICE OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY, INC.
Profit & Loss
 January 2017

	Jan 17	Jan 16	Jan 17
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
3030 · Contributions-General	24,216.30	20,553.13	24,216.30
3050 · Group Insurance (Group premium payments)	21.00	127.00	21.00
8010 · Literature Sales	5,848.37	3,832.38	5,848.37
8020 · Meeting Guide Sales	913.50	372.50	913.50
8060 · Newsletter	5.00	0.00	5.00
Total Income	31,004.17	24,885.01	31,004.17
Cost of Goods Sold			
5000 · Cost of Goods Sold			
5100 · Cost of Inventory Sold	4,774.44	3,160.63	4,774.44
5150 · Cost of Meeting Directories	222.64	109.00	222.64
Total 5000 · Cost of Goods Sold	4,997.08	3,269.63	4,997.08
Total COGS	4,997.08	3,269.63	4,997.08
Gross Profit	26,007.09	21,615.38	26,007.09
Expense			
6010 · Alarm Service	207.00	0.00	207.00
6025 · Central Office Events Expense	0.00	1,000.00	0.00
6070 · Bank Credit card charges (Credit card costs and fees)	74.08	62.49	74.08
6120 · Computer Expenses	40.00	0.00	40.00
6160 · Copier Expense	37.10	52.00	37.10
6225 · Insurance - Emp. Health Plan	528.28	483.95	528.28
6240 · Employee HRA Plan	0.00	601.60	0.00
6245 · Internet Access Charges	12.50	0.00	12.50
6320 · Newsletter Expense	111.33	55.17	111.33
6330 · Office Expense	197.87	106.73	197.87
6360 · Archives	48.58	0.00	48.58
6380 · Payroll Taxes	931.06	522.05	931.06
6410 · Postage	14.08	8.45	14.08
6480 · Rent	2,457.60	2,368.25	2,457.60
6510 · Repairs & Maintenance	0.00	137.29	0.00
6540 · Salaries - Office			
6541 · Vacation Pay	-1,129.89	0.00	-1,129.89
6540 · Salaries - Office - Other	8,203.17	4,261.50	8,203.17
Total 6540 · Salaries - Office	7,073.28	4,261.50	7,073.28
6560 · Payroll Expenses	105.51	52.76	105.51
6600 · Signing Services	200.00	200.00	200.00
7050 · Telephone	257.90	169.48	257.90
9080 · Sales Tax (Sales tax paid on purchases)	-0.47	-0.75	-0.47
Total Expense	12,295.70	10,080.97	12,295.70
Net Ordinary Income	13,711.39	11,534.41	13,711.39
Other Income/Expense			
Other Income			
8025 · Rebate	6.75	0.00	6.75
8030 · Interest Income	8.01	0.80	8.01
Total Other Income	14.76	0.80	14.76
Net Other Income	14.76	0.80	14.76
	13,726.15	11,535.21	13,726.15

INTERGROUP CENTRAL OFFICE OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY, INC.

Balance Sheet

As of January 31, 2017

	Feb 1, 17
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1010 · Petty Cash	142.45
1020 · First Republic Bank (Checking account)	36,345.74
1021 · (PR) First Rep. Bank CD 0429 (12 Mo. CD @ .5%, 08/12/16)	17,779.58
1023 · (PR) First Rep. Bank CD 3228 (12 Mo. CD @ .35%, 02/05/16)	16,609.73
1027 · (PR) First Rep. Bank CD 7681 (12 Mo. CD @ .3%, 4/29/17)	15,119.50
1028 · (PR) First Rep. Bank CD 6955 (8 Mo. CD @ .35%, 04/30/16)	20,151.57
1029 · (PR) First Rep. Bank CD	15,000.00
Total Checking/Savings	121,148.57
Accounts Receivable	
1110 · Accounts Rec - Group Deposits	-1,192.72
Total Accounts Receivable	-1,192.72
Other Current Assets	
1250 · Literature Inventory	21,678.46
1310 · Prepaid Insurance	3,998.58
13700 · Payroll Service Customer Asset (Payroll Service Customer Asset)	-0.01
1499 · Undeposited Funds	3,548.71
Total Other Current Assets	29,225.74
Total Current Assets	149,181.59
Fixed Assets	
1630 · Office Equipment	29,553.31
1640 · Office Furnishings - Asset	7,757.80
1641 · Less Accumulated Depreciation	-23,101.31
1680 · Leasehold Improvements	300.00
1681 · Less Accumulated Amortization	-300.00
Total Fixed Assets	14,209.80
Other Assets	
1860 · Deposits	1,993.85
Total Other Assets	1,993.85
TOTAL ASSETS	165,385.24
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Credit Cards	
2075 · American Express	8,224.49
Total Credit Cards	8,224.49
Other Current Liabilities	
2240 · Sales Tax Payable (due quarterly)	537.76
2340 · Accrued Vacation	12,428.39
2600 · Unity Day	2,027.42
Total Other Current Liabilities	14,993.57
Total Current Liabilities	23,218.06
Total Liabilities	23,218.06
Equity	
3100 · Prior period adj. - vacation	-11,704.87
3900 · Unrestricted Funds	140,145.70
Net Income	13,726.15
Total Equity	142,167.18
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	165,385.24

February 2017

INTERGROUP CENTRAL OFFICE OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY, INC.
Group Contributions
 January 2017

	Jan 17	Jan 17
1 Inv Freedom Fellowship 70940	350.47	350.47
1 INV Fremont & Manet Group 70975	500.00	500.00
1 INV One Day at a Time 70903	2,401.00	2,401.00
1 INV R and B Group 70972	910.00	910.00
1 INV South County Fellowship 70954	3,900.00	3,900.00
1 INV Sufficient Substitute 313	400.00	400.00
1 INV Winchester Fellowship 70960	177.60	177.60
3rd Steppers Book Study (Wom) 610 (T	190.00	190.00
Big Book Speakers Group 289 (Fri.)	112.00	112.00
Birthday Contribution 00951	475.00	475.00
Cambrian Saturday Night (Chips) 376 (T	312.00	312.00
Chip Winners (Chips) 168 (Wed.)	161.70	161.70
Chips and Dyps (Chips) 559 (Tues.)	168.00	168.00
Desi's In Recovery (723)	146.58	146.58
Easier Way Group 290 (Fri.)	242.24	242.24
Evergreen Group 884 (Thur.)	70.00	70.00
Friday Big Book Study 702 (Fri)	253.19	253.19
G Cornerstone Fellowship Group 709	180.00	180.00
G Fair Avenue Fellowship 70901	613.14	613.14
G Sunrise Group of Palo Alto 70963	1,800.00	1,800.00
G Sunrisers Group/Dennys 70932	540.78	540.78
G Third Tradition Women's Gp, The 70	184.49	184.49
G West Valley Fellowship 70942	526.98	526.98
Gay & Lesbian Step & Trad GP 221 (Fr	119.00	119.00
Gay Living Sober Group 21 (Sun.)	77.00	77.00
Gay Reflections on the Solution 841(Wk	124.00	124.00
Get Up and Go (Women) 187 (Sat.)	1,041.50	1,041.50
Grateful Live Group 535 (Mon.)	168.00	168.00
Happy Destiny (Women) 109 (Tues.)	596.00	596.00
Higher Power Hour (Men) 872 (Mor	452.00	452.00
In the Solution 647 (Sat.)	99.68	99.68
Joy of Living PA 464 (Wed.)	168.00	168.00
Just For Today 238 PA (Thur.)	168.00	168.00
Living in the 12 & 12 851 (Mon.)	68.17	68.17
Los Altos Big Book 860 (Thurs.)	275.55	275.55
Los Altos Men's Group 59 (Mon.)	70.00	70.00
Men's Single Problem Study 89 (Mo	300.00	300.00
Men's Single Problem Study Gp 220 (T	1,482.90	1,482.90
Men's Topic Meeting 137 (Tues.)	58.00	58.00
Monday at a Time 208 (Mon.)	141.10	141.10
New Nooners 808 (Mon.)	115.00	115.00
New People's Group 3 (Sun.)	105.00	105.00
Off the Top 371 (Thur.)	100.00	100.00
Other Wednesday Nite, The (Men) 209 (700.00	700.00
Personal 00911	305.00	305.00



BIRTHDAY CONTRIBUTION

CELEBRANT:

Name _____

Address _____

Sobriety Date _____

Amount of contribution: \$ _____

CONTRIBUTOR:

Name _____

Address _____

We would like to print this information in the **COIN**, unless you indicate otherwise below:

Print celebrant name? Yes No

Print contributor name? Yes No

We truly appreciate this contribution and celebrating this milestone.

Thank you!



M A R C H 1 8 ^{T H}
2 0 1 7
S A T U R D A Y
1 2 - 3 : 0 0 P M
Santa Clara County Intergroup

Chili Cook-off

Lincoln Glen Church
2700 Booksin Ave
San Jose



For more information on how to register your team or volunteer contact Central Office at 408-374-8511

Bring your homegroup for the annual Serenity Chili Cook-off
Sat, March 18th
12-3pm
12-2pm Chili Tasting and Cornbread Feast
2-3pm AA Speaker Meeting



\$10 donation suggested

Bring on the heat!

Pack your sombrero and see if your homegroup can win the bragging rights!!!





Be Your Own Valentine



All are Welcome



SNL 2634 Union Ave. Sunday, Feb. 13th 5pm - 6:30pm

Come let your Creative side out!



If you're crafty, then you're just our Type!

Tile Painting:

\$5.00 Small Tiles

\$10.00 Large Tiles

Message in a Bottle: \$5.00



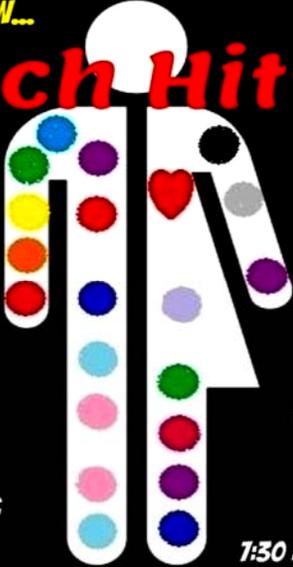
Even Decorate your own Cupcake! \$2 (Includes Cupcake and 1 Bottle Water)



If you would like to Donate or be of Service to this event,
Please contact Yvonne 408-348-2522

SOBER AND FREE 2017 PRESENTS AN ALL INCLUSIVE DRAG SHOW...

Switch Hitters



SATURDAY MARCH 4.
CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL LIVING
1195 CLARK ST.
SAN JOSE, CA 95125

\$15 ADMISSION
\$20 VIP SEATING

6:30 : DOORS OPEN
7PM : SPEAKER & INTRODUCING THE PERFORMERS
7:30 : PRE-SHOW EVENTS
8PM : SHOWTIME!!!

WWW.SOBERANDFREE.ORG

