

East Bay Circle of Men

Vol. 27 # The Newsletter of the East Bay Circle of Men Compiled by the



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Feeling good about Yes and No

By, Mike Fullmer

She asks me for help, my ex "to be", she was broken her leg
Last week she broke it, needing surgery
Needing a plate and screws to hold the bone together

Can I do some shopping, "sure can, can you text me a list?"
But the pain medication is making her groggy and she can't make a list

Frustration flows though me, what does she want, now what, dread fills my bones
Fear of going back to old patterns, patterns of dependency and reward

But I am not living at the house, what the F... does she needs or want from me
She is hurt, tired and can't get around and on pain med's, so
I can be supportive and still hold my boundaries!

I pick up dinner, go over to the house, work out the shopping list with her
And in the morning, I do the shopping, bring it by and have lunch
Where are my boundaries...

She is needy and wants me to stay, but I have other commitments
Explaining to her that I can stay a bit but need to go, she is disappointed
But, I am ok with my no, with setting a boundary!

Learning to show up, because it fosters who I want to be
Be supportive, not ruled by fear but by respect and love
Hold boundaries and feeling good about my yes and no's

Through three cheese trees three free fleas flew.
While these fleas flew, freezy breeze blew.
Freezy breeze made these three trees freeze.
Freezy trees made these trees' cheese freeze.
That's what made these three free fleas sneeze.

from Fox in Sox by Dr. Seuss (submitted by Steve Rentmeesters)

Fury, Frustration and Final Thoughts (Why I Left) By Mark Dungey

An Anecdote on Tradition:

A mother was preparing a ham for baking as her daughter looked on. She cut off the ends of the ham and placed it in, what was now, a baking pan twice the size of the ham.

"Mommy, why do you cut the ends of the ham before you put it in the oven?"

"It's the way your grandmother did it," responded the mother. She continued, "We'll ask grandma. "

The mother and daughter were visiting for dinner at the older woman's house and, while preparing a ham for dinner, the grandmother lopped off the ends of the ham and placed it in a considerably larger baking pan. Reminding herself of the query she had asked her mother, the little girl again asked, "Grandma, why do you cut the ends off your ham?"

Looking puzzled briefly she responded, "Honestly, I'm not really sure, I just did what your great-grandmother did."

Joining the two previous generations the eldest sat down with the others to eat. As the ham was brought out in its much larger pan, the little girl again asked, "Great grandma?"

"Yes dear?"

"Mommy said she cut the ends of our ham because grandma did it. Grandma said she cut the ends off her ham because you did. Why did *you* cut *your* ham?"

"Simple sweetie. Because my oven was too small!"

Being asked multiple times about an earlier newsletter deadline, I felt as if EBCoM was mired in traditions not unlike the one cited above. When a fellow team member, regarding this newsletter, asked, "Why is the deadline on Sunday midnight? Is the newsletter being put together now? This isn't the way it's always been done," the question, while being the most recent, was far from the only one. "The way it's always been done," seems a rationalization in preventing improvement.

At the same time, I'm not against retaining routines and traditions that have relevance and value, as long as those routines and traditions don't sabotage raising the bar. Another team member told me that I shouldn't change the typeface and format of submissions. Citing that *his* format has long been his trademark. "This *is* the way it's always been done," While I understand everyone's need to acknowledge their individuality, the consistency of format gives the newsletter a professional polish. Additionally, what of the illegible handwritten submission? Not only did this endeavor require reformatting (which included retyping handwritten submissions) but I also took it upon myself to erase watermarks from comics and other stock material. Shouldn't it be enough to have a byline so the Circle knows who it is? Is it oppressive to require people to adhere to social norms of a majority? (Perhaps too big a question to unpack here.) When it comes to a deadline, whether laid down by a chief, wallah, or the circle as a whole, do we saunter in late when the time comes to "Circle up?"

An Anecdote on Social Norms:

During the day, a student center at a community college served as a meeting place, social center, and, of course, cafeteria. Around lunch it would be a raucous affair with people talking, playing dominoes, and even some playing music. As the afternoon wore on, a hush would fall upon the center and by late afternoon it would be as quiet as a library, so students would use it as a study hall.

One evening as students read and memorized lessons, and researched and wrote their papers, a single student carrying a radio that interrupted everyone's scholastic efforts, sat down at a table. As the music from the radio reverberated through the space, people asked if the student would turn it down so they could work.

The student's response was, "This isn't the library. There isn't a rule that says I can't play music."

In response, the other students summoned an employee of the college who told the student that, while there is no formal rule against playing music, one only need to look around to realize all the other students in the center were studying.

Begrudgingly, the student turned off the radio.

If it be the case for the wallah *not* to look after the *quality* of the newsletter, and given that each team is perfectly capable of printing calendars and labels that are already provided on the website, the newsletter wallah position is altogether unnecessary. (The teammate mentioned earlier agreed) The box of supplies can be handed off to the next team in the way the breakfast materials are exchanged.

I have very, very few things that I can, with any self-confidence (something I'm extremely short on) attest that I'm good at. And since, by consequence, the newsletter wallah position is unnecessary, it makes my gifts in this area also unnecessary. As said, my self-confidence is already on shaky ground. Perhaps 12 years in an abusive relationship lent to such thin skin, but I digress.

I'm someone that is educated (B.A. in English with a Creative Writing Concentration) experienced (Copy/Content Writer and Managing Editor of a Literary Journal), and passionate about the written word (yes I'm one of those Strunk and White grammar and mechanics geeks). I'm also someone who wants to "raise the bar" in my own life. This is why I came to EBCoM.

"Crab Mentality" is inspired by the many species of crabs are known to pull each other back into confinement when more than one is present. As the Urban Dictionary cites, the "Crabs-in-a-barrel" mentality is "a syndrome where a group of like situated people hurt those in their community attempting to get ahead.

Often this is applied to people in an impoverished community where one person is starting to get ahead. The collective community becomes jealous or filled with a sense of self-loathing, so they find a way to pull that person back down to the community's level. When harvesting crab, the crab as a group will pull down any crab that starts to climb out of the barrel in an attempt to be the first out of the barrel that holds them in, hence crabs-in-a-barrel." Can't help but think ...

I've given this decision a lot of thought. I've had great experiences in EBCoM, but to be made to feel worthless brings back the trauma of that abusive relationship as well as my upbringing. I appreciated all the calls, texts, and emails of curiosity and concern. I simply had a desire to share my single gift with the circle, and to be told it's unneeded, unnecessary, or unwanted cuts me to the core, yet it's understandable given "it's the way it's always been done."

With sincerest love, gratitude, and best wishes Mark Dungey, formerly of the EBCoM.

Forgiveness – Mourning the Loss of Revenge – Part 1

I recently finished reading “I Feel You, The Surprising Power of Extreme Empathy” by Cris Beam. In the book she describes forgiveness as mourning the loss of revenge. I have always had difficulty with forgiveness. I say this because I would be reminded of something that someone had done and I would feel angry and want to take revenge and be vengeful.

When I think about grief or mourning I immediately think of my sister’s death and how hard that was for me to grieve as a child. As an adult I spent time in therapy learning how to grieve. Now when I experience something that reminds me of that grief I can readily feel the grief even when it is very intense. I know these reminders can come at any time and that I am capable dealing with them. Now they occur at less frequent intervals and resolve much faster.

So now I am looking at the mourning of the loss of revenge in much the same way. When I am reminded of what someone has done and I feel the anger, the desire for revenge, I realize these feelings pass too. These feelings also occur less frequently and also resolve much faster.

One of the incidences that brings up this anger was when I was with my first wife Maria. We were in the kitchen of our home in Austin, TX making a meal and she asked me how I felt about my sister’s death. I became silent, part of me was going to that deep place within me where I felt that. Part of me was connected to my first trauma, being circumcised, that pre-verbal place. Then I was shocked out of these inner voyages by being hit with a wooden spoon. I tried to tell Maria to stop; she hit harder, this time breaking my tailbone. It was excruciatingly painful. I thought I might become paralyzed. I grabbed the spoon and broke it over my knee. I regret not ramming the two pieces into her ears; and I am glad I didn’t ram them into her ears because I would have been arrested. One of the things that reminds me of this incident is whenever I hear about “spousal” abuse. In the US there are over 3000 centers for women who have been abused by their husbands but there is only 1 center for men who have been abused by their wives even though 100s of studies have shown that men are just as likely to be abused by their wives as wives are abused by their husbands!

Needless to say that was the beginning of the end to our marriage. We went to marriage counseling at the University of Texas counseling center but they just told her not to hit me. This was my first exposure to therapy and it left me feeling therapy was totally useless.

We moved to northern California together. After about a year and a half, in October 1987, the 20th anniversary of my sister’s death I must have been feeling somewhat depressed. Maria’s reaction was to, without any discussion or warning, take our dog down to her parents in LA. When she returned without our dog she demanded that we

go to couples counseling. In our first session I asked her if she would work on her violence. She said no, so I said I wanted a divorce rather than counseling.

I realized that my grief for my sister was my problem so I decided to try working with that counselor individually. That worked out well and eventually lead me to joining a men's therapy group and then to the Mendocino Men's Conferences with Michael Meade. At the Mendocino Men's Conferences I also met Mark Peterson who introduced me to EBNom (now East Bay Circle of Men).

What is Self-Forgiveness? What is Self-Revenge? - Part 2

I will start with "What is self-revenge?". I think any self defeating behavior is a form of self-revenge. All self-defeating behaviors also have a positive side, something that they do for us. It all seems to be finding a behavior or combination of behaviors that give us a reasonable outcome.

My current self-defeating behavior is losing **f**ocus and **f**eeding. So when I was writing the first part of the article and I was get too emotionally caught up in it I would stop and eat a piece of chocolate or some almonds. So I would try to stop and realize that is what I was about to do and calm myself down and just write the next sentence or fix one of the previous ones rather than eat something. It worked some of the time.

Losing the self-revenge I am forced to feel all my feelings. Because I am a highly sensitive person, I see subtle shades of colors, I hear softer sounds, etc. I can get overwhelmed from my own emotions. Without a good way to hold and be present with my feelings I just defeat them. Over the years I have gotten much better with being present with my feelings and not judging them or wanting to change them.

One of the reasons the "consequences" portion of our Saturday meeting doesn't work for me is because it feels like self-revenge. It doesn't have any direct or indirect benefit for me.

Steve Rentmeesters

P.S. On another **F**ront, I have **F**ound a new job and will be starting on May 29th! It is in Pleasanton so I will have to return to riding my bike to work. I will be working on the ddPCR (droplet digital Polymerase Chain Reaction) machines. PCR is used to generate multiple copies of a portion of DNA so it can be identified (the dd section).

Me, my grandfather, And the F word when I was four – Jonas Osmand

My grandfather was what we would call ‘old-school’ these days. His father, my great grandfather, immigrated to lower Manhattan from Lithuania at the age of 16 all by himself. He became what they call an Arabber in some parts of the United States - someone who sells fruits and vegetables from a horse drawn cart on the streets. He married and raised four children – he sent all three boys to law school and the daughter to a liberal arts university. After passing the bar in two states, successfully owning and operating the only gourmet restaurant in Omaha, Nebraska, a bar across from the Ford motor plant in Los Angeles, and a large and very popular restaurant in the Los Angeles suburbs, the three brothers forged & forever mysterious business partnership with Bugsy Siegel and Moe Sedway and divided their time between Beverly Hills and Las Vegas. This was my grandfather. Old-school. Dressed to the nine’s. A real dandy. Constantly smoking a double Churchill cigars. Driving a Cadillac. Wearing \$500 English shoes. A real O.G. The F word certainly did not enter into his vocabulary. One day, in 1970, he drove up to Berkeley in his droptop, gold Cadillac Eldorado to visit his daughter, the poet, who had married an English major and lived in Berkeley down the street from Tom Wolfe and across from Jack and Jorma from Jefferson Airplane. Culture clash hung in the airlike meat on a butchers hook. I, at the age of four, would unsuspectingly become the mouthpiece of this cultural zeitgeist and clash of generations. We drove out to Jack London Square to one of those places on the water. I think it’s called Kincaid’s now. One of those places with & large menu, an even larger freezer, mediocre food, high prices and views of the harbor. Every coastal town has one. As my grandfather sat, in his double-breasted suit with pocket square, enjoying his Bouillabaisse and making polite conversation (no doubt wondering why my father didn’t shave and wore a tweed co&t with patches on the elbows), my father tried to impress with this academic knowledge and my mother worked triage between the old-school Jewish New Yorker and her midwesterner-turned-academic goyishe husband, I sat gazing out the window. During a lull in the conversation the din of the other diners seemed to subside and I said, in & loud clear voice:

“Look at all them fuckin’ boats!”

My grandfather stared at me, stared at my mother, put down his tableware, took his napkin off of his chest, wiped his mouth, put it down, looked at me, glanced at my father, looked at my mother and asked, “what did he just say?” At this point I will let the F word be the star of the show, and as we sit in uncomfortable silence in the restaurant on the water surrounded by all those fucking boats, we fade to black.

Welcome to My Mind Fooling the Mind

Jeff Randall

Man, you're fucking crazy.

You're so full of shit.

You don't know what you're talking about.

You're such an idiot.

I wish you'd just shut the fuck up.

I can't believe I'm listening to this shit.

And, would you please cut those nose hairs.

Welcome to my mind. I've become really good at managing it. I watch thoughts like these come and go. It takes some doing. Used to be exhausting. Now, I see how much distance those thoughts create, re-focus, make contact, see the person behind my righteous bullshit, and watch those thoughts take a backseat...until the next time.

The flip side of this mind-fuck is being in the presence of one of you guys who I put on a pedestal. I shrink, become 12 years old, and don't say much of anything. That one happened recently. At one of our events, I'm standing there, minding my own business, when one of "those guys" comes over to me, making some small talk comment and I just kind of blathered something that I hoped sounded cool. You'd think it was Steph Curry who had approached me. I struggle all the time with that one.

Living a life of "one up, one down" is not how I want to live. That's one of the main reasons I love The Circle. I get to get to past this stuff and then not and then do and then not. I'm hooked to the process. It's how I become a better man. And, I love you guys for being my fun house mirrors.

Trust the Men, Trust the Process!

Tali- Post Script
Jeff Randall

Two weeks after Tali read my letter posted on WhatsApp, she responded:

Hey,

I appreciate (sic) your attempts to communicate with me. I got all your cards.

I guess its (sic) hard for you, but I don't want to meet you.

I responded:

Thanks for responding. And please know the door is always open.

(After moving through my sadness, I'm fine. After a long journey of not knowing, I have the closure I was looking for.)

FFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFF

Four furious friends fought for the phone.

Fresh French fried fly fritters

Five frantic frogs fled from fifty fierce fishes.

Five fuzzy French frogs Frolicked through the fields in France.

Crossroads

We've all been there. Many times, in fact. Any animal with a brain has been at a crossroads. What do we do? Sometimes a crossroads has two choices. Sometimes there are many. Sometimes these decisions are easy. Coke or Pepsi? Sometimes they're not. Purdue or Notre Dame (personally, I recommend Purdue instead of that vocational school in South Bend)?

Sometimes the way through the crossroads is obvious, but we still make the wrong decision with potentially catastrophic consequences. The decision matrix is infinite.

As humans, we are given the intelligence to navigate the most difficult crossroads. Our survival, livelihood and happiness depends on the confidence and willingness to ply these sometimes rough waters

Years ago I decided to invite a nice but quiet and shy girl to the junior prom. What began as an awkward but pleasant evening became a lifetime romance. We broke up after high school, matured, got back together after college, became engaged, married, and on and on. You know the story. It was all supposed to end happily ever after.

But the decades grinded us down to an emotionless and lifeless relationship. The romance was gone a long time ago. We no longer laughed together, looked forward to our future, cuddled, or even felt comfortable confiding in each other. When I was with her the delight in her eyes was a distant memory. It became unbearable for me to know that the love of my life had become a woman who seemingly despised my presence at the dinner table, let alone in the bed we shared. The difficult crossroads came when I decided upon divorce.

For myself, the potential consequences were many and diverse. Leaving the community I called home for 50 years was the most profound and is still painful. The prospect of not having anybody to care for me should my help fail again hangs over me as an evil reminder that I need to live life within acceptable risks. As a single wage burner I could no longer rely upon my partner. These are just some of the major consequences taking my chosen path at the most significant crossroads of my life.

Obviously nobody knows what tomorrow brings. My second life as a single man is still in its

ifancy. And hopefully I have managed the risks successfully. I love my new home in a different community. My first ailment after divorce was difficult, but I managed my way through it. Finances are never easy, and my former bride is entitled a significant portion of my retirement income; but I'm managing. And as an added bonus, I even have a new romance in my life! But as expected, I'm happy. Even the same old songs on the radio sound better now.

Yoga Berra is famous for saying, "When you get to a fork in the road, take". Better yet, go into those crossroads intelligently and confidently. Manage your decisions well. Ask your family and friends (hey, you still have friends; you're part of EBCOM!) for support. You'll go through these crossroads and be ok in the end.

- Adrian Levy

The Final Fixing of the Foolish Fugitive

Feeling footloose, fancy-free and frisky, this feather-brained fellow finagled his fond father into forking over his fortune. Forthwith, he fled for foreign fields and frittered his farthings feasting fabulously with fair-weather friends. Finally, fleeced by those folly filled fellows and facing famine, he found him-self a feed flinger in a filthy farm-lot. He fain would have filled his frame with foraged food from fodder fragments.

"Foey! My father's flunkies fare far fancier," the frazzled fugitive fumed feverishly, frankly facing fact.

Frustrated from failure and filled with forebodings, he fled for his family. Falling at his father's feet, he floundered forlornly. "Father, I have flunked and fruitlessly forfeited further family favors . . ."

But the faithful father, forestalling further flinching, frantically flagged his flunkies to fetch forth the finest fatling and fix a feast.

But the fugitive's fault finding frater, faithfully farming his father's fields for free, frowned at this fickle forgiveness of former falderal. His fury flashed, but fussing was futile.

His foresighted father figured, "Such filial fidelity is fine, but what forbids fervent festivities? The fugitive is found! Unfurl the flags! With fanfare flaring, let fun, frolic and frivolity flow freely, former failures forgotten and folly forsaken."

Forgiveness forms a firm foundation for future fortitude.

(Sir John Hensch of London) [submitted by Steve Rentmeesters]

Best of Both Worlds

Jay Bunker - Outlier

(from May 12, 2018 blog post on Healing4Real.org)

The report from my latest PET/CT scan on March 30th contained welcome news - the tumors in my tongue, larynx area, and left arm pit lymph nodes had shrunk significantly and those in the right arm pit were no longer even visible! Less welcome is the fact that I have continued to grapple with colitis (a side effect of the immunotherapy) which has become more difficult to manage, necessitating higher overall doses of prednisone. I did have a month with no prednisone in February/early March, but since then increasing symptoms necessitated a resumption of the medication. Fortunately, I finally got to see a gastroenterologist recently (after waiting many months) and had a colonoscopy which enabled him to see the colitis lesions in the colon. He prescribed a drug called Budesonide which can treat the colon topically and which will hopefully enable me to manage the colitis without the prednisone and all of the negative systemic effects that brings with it. Unlike prednisone, budesonide focuses in the colon rather than working systemically against the tumor-fighting action of the Keytruda immunotherapy treatment. I will meet with my oncologist next week to go over the results of the colonoscopy, and the odds are good that we will plan for my first Keytruda infusion in over ten weeks.

The stretch of time I was off of prednisone in February/March - during the cold, dark, and short days of late winter - were challenging. Without the antiinflammatory effects of the drug, my side effects returned resulting in less energy, lower mood, increased joint pain and stiffness, etc. Since I anticipate going off prednisone again in the near future, I am hoping that the increasing light and warmth of spring will make the ride a little easier next time around. (The new colitis drug may help too since a small amount of the steroid probably gets absorbed into my system.)

In the adjunctive treatment department, I did start on the Low Dose Naltrexone (LDN) in late January. As I suspected, my oncologist eventually said he could not prescribe it for me as “there is not enough science to back it up”. Though I consider that statement to be BS since research on LDN has

been ongoing since 1980 - albeit not large scale clinical trials (who would pay for those?) - I eventually took it in stride with the supportive coaching of my medical advocate Mark Renneker since - as he pointed out - any approach outside of the standard of practice tends to be ignored by most oncologists. When I met with my primary doc Boud Atterbury he was happy to prescribe it after five minutes of conversation and a quick internet search on his smart phone!

In the energetic healing arena, I am enjoying my deepening daily practice of Qigong. I realized in early April that I had too much on my plate to complete the prerequisites for the Practitioner Training Course I had hoped to start in May, so I opted to postpone my enrollment in that program until September. (This came about in part from my realization that I am more interested in engaging the materials deeply than in getting through quickly.) I am also planning to attend another week long healing retreat at the Chi Center in Galisteo the last week in June on the one year anniversary of my first retreat last June/July. I hope to also receive a healing session with Master Mingtong Gu during one of the evening sessions. I am so grateful for this enlivening access to the abundant energy that surrounds us.

A high point this year was a visit from my son Matthew in April. He graduated a year ago from NYU film and television school and seems to be greatly enjoying his post-student life. He is living in Brooklyn where he is close to loads of work in sound recording for a variety of productions, so he can basically work as much as he wants. Hanging out with Matthew and enjoying diversions like baseball, movies and hiking was a timely "staycation" from my normal busy routines. It has also been very gratifying to experience the evolution of our relationship from primarily father/son to more of a comradely connection. But he is still, after all, my son, so I also get to indulge my fatherly delight at who he is becoming - the best of both worlds!



Matthew and Jay Bunker

WHAT I FOUND IN A BOOK

Alan, 10/90 - June, 2018

One day I walked into a San Francisco store because it was on the quirky side. There was a short, fat book sitting on a side table. I opened it and it seemed to me that the book fell open to a particular page somewhere near the middle. It contained just one sentence and it astounded me. I wrote it down and here it is ...

“He told me once he forgot himself and his heart opened up like a door with a loose latch and everything fell out and he tried for days to put it all back in the proper order, but finally he gave up and left it there in a pile and loved everything equally.”

Filling You in on the **F**uture Logo Process

Feedback about the **F**uture logo is slowly **F**iltering in, and a good conversation is beginning to **F**erment, some of which has been audible on our new Google essential feed.

Therefore I **F**eel it is **F**itting to **F**orbear **F**orcing a **F**inish. So please **F**eel **F**ree to **F**lout my **F**ormer **F**iat about a deadline. Please keep on thinking, imagining and communicating. I am compiling a digital scrapbook of all the ideas, words, images that have been percolating, will share it probably in late June, and ask for time for an in-person conversation at the earliest possible subsequent **F**ire Circle.

Peter G

Health Wallah Corner

Mindfulness is the key to physical, emotional, financial, mental and every other kind of health that you can define.

Being mindful means paying attention. It means being present. This Health Wallah corner is focused on the simple act of breathing. The passage below is taken from the Buddhist Monk Thich Nhat Hanh.

Breathing

Our breathing is a stable solid ground that we can take refuge in. Regardless of our internal weather- our thoughts, emotions and perceptions- our breathing is always with us like a faithful friend. Whenever we feel carried away, or sunken in a deep emotion, or scattered in worries and projects, we return to our breathing to collect and anchor our mind.

We feel the flow of air coming in and going out of our nose. We feel how light and natural, how calm and peaceful our breathing functions. At any time, while we are walking, gardening, or typing, we can return to this peaceful source of life.

We may like to recite:

“Breathing in I know that I am breathing in.
Breathing out I know that I am breathing out.”

We do not need to control our breath. Feel the breath as it actually is. It may be long or short, deep or shallow. With our awareness it will naturally become slower and deeper. Conscious breathing is the key to uniting body and mind and bringing the energy of mindfulness into each moment of our life.

Submitted by Don Peck

Mission Statement Proposal

Steve Rein, B Team

Following our procedure for proposals, I brought this to the Chiefs and the Firecircle on May 23rd and published it in this newsletter and on Essential. It will be discussed and (hopefully) approved at the June 27th Firecircle.

My proposal is for a succinct “mission statement” for EBCOM. It includes our current Purpose, references our Standards and Agreements, and adds the core concepts of Accountability and Integrity, so that the statement makes clear to everyone *why* we are here and *what* we stand for.

EBCOM Mission Statement

The Mission of the East Bay Circle of Men is to support Men, Teams, Families and Community, to hold each other Accountable to our Standards and Agreements, and to act with Integrity.

After I introduced this proposal at the last Firecircle and received the approval and support of the Chiefs and much positivity from the men in attendance Peter G noted to me his agreement with the Mission Statement, and suggested that it also include reference to Intimacy and Love. While I appreciate that Intimacy and Love are two of the more important aspects of *how* we give support, I believe our Mission Statement best serves by succinctly stating *what* we do and stand for. Although we are also about trust, vulnerability, opportunities for leadership, fun, a safe place to risk, sharing openly, camaraderie, mirroring, etc., the Mission Statement is not the place to enumerate the many ways that we support Men, Teams,

Families and Community.

Thanks for your support toward adopting this EBCOM Mission Statement.

[Please note that this Mission Statement proposal is *not* related or connected to John Timothy's separate proposal for specific language to be added to the Living Document regarding a specific affirmation of **Accountability** by each member. It's been agreed that JT's proposal will be addressed afterward at the Firecircle. This Mission Statement should be adopted with our overwhelming support, regardless of any action, debate, alterations, adoption, rejection or consideration of JT's proposal.]

Gradjansky's Proposed Friendly Amendment to Rein's Mission Statement

Thank you for listening, remembering our conversation so well, Steve. I still believe that **LOVE**, equally with integrity, is not only how we give support, but what we stand for, though it is not often spoken explicitly (and should be.) The exclusive emphasis on integrity strikes me always as coming from the assumption that the tendency is to slip from that. Well, the same is true for love, and it is especially easy to get righteous about what we think in the moment is a stand for integrity, and to neglect the love side of the equation. It is the unique characteristic of EBNOM, as opposed to some other Sterling descended organizations, that we are generally mindful of balancing love and integrity not that they are ever in conflict, but simply that our passion for either can cause us momentarily to neglect the other. We should always ask ourselves, "Are my actions or words right now in integrity and equally, are they coming from love?" Therefore I am

publishing now, and plan to offer at the appropriate FireCircle moment the **Following Friendly Amendment to Steve's proposed EBCOM Mission Statement:**

EBCOM Mission Statement

(as proposed by Peter's Friendly amendment)

The Mission of the East Bay Circle of Men is to support Men, Teams, Families and Community, to hold each other Accountable to our Standards and Agreements, and to act with Integrity and Love.

June 2018 Chief's Corner

David Block, Finance Chief

I have been the Finance Chief for about six months now. It's been interesting. It's been challenging. It's been terrifying. It's been satisfying. At times, I feel the urge to run back into the shadows. But, I know that this is good for me.

Regarding my responsibility of handling the finances of the organization, I have been tracking the day to day cash flow and sending and receiving payments for various things. I have also published annual and quarterly reports. I even put together a budget for the year. I hope all of you have had a chance to look at these reports and budget. It is eye opening. Before I became Finance Chief and during the first couple months on the job, I didn't really have a handle on what the financial situation was of the organization. After going through the exercise of generating these reports and planning for the year, the picture is becoming clearer.

2018 Budget

INCOME	AMOUNT
Member Dues	\$ 4,000.00
Fall Event	\$ 5,000.00
Family Campout	\$ 6,000.00
Halloween Party	\$ 1,000.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 16,000.00
EXPENSES	AMOUNT
Saturday Breakfast	\$ 1,650.00
Coffee & Tea	\$ 400.00
Newsletters	\$ 1,400.00
Fire Circle	\$ 400.00
Fall Event	\$ 5,000.00
Family Campout	\$ 6,000.00
Halloween Party	\$ 1,000.00
Thanksgiving	\$ 200.00
Insurance	\$ 500.00
Chiefs' Aways	\$ 300.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 16,850.00
TOTAL PROFIT (LOSS)	\$ (850.00)

The bottom line of all this is the bottom line. We are set up to operate at a loss every year. Yes, that's right. What makes this confusing, is that we have a good chunk of change in the bank. Let me explain. We have expected income every year in the form of membership dues. With somewhere in the ballpark of 70 members, some of whom are remote and are paying reduced "outlier" fees, the income from dues is about \$4k. Then on the other side, we have expected operating expenses every year, which include Saturday breakfasts and newsletters - things that we all know about. But, we also have other, less visible expenses every year, such as insurance, coffee, firewood and sage, and chiefs aways. The membership dues do not cover all of these expenses – hence the red budget. And this doesn't even take into consideration unexpected, non-recurring expenses. We have kicked in money for the Thanksgiving Fire Circle some years. We supported the Christmas Caroling event last year. There have been memorials to honor members who have passed on. We have initiation events, such as the gauntlet, which seems to be turning into a recurring thing. We may have one-off events that request financial support that pop up throughout any given year.

Well, then how do we have a few thousand in the bank? The recurring events that we have throughout each year – the Campout, the Fall Event, the Halloween Party – are planned to be break-even events. We do not plan on making money from these events. It just so happened, by chance, that these events have turned a profit in recent years. The recent proceeds from the Halloween Party are earmarked specifically for community service and is the basis for our "Community Service Fund". The gains that we have seen from the campouts and fall events have gone into the general kitty.

Some men may be thinking, "Why do we need to pay dues? We've got plenty of money." This article is intended to help answer that question. As an organization, we need to have a serious conversation about how we manage our finances. Do we want to rely on pure chance to stay solvent? What are we going to cut in order to balance the budget? Do we want to turn some events into fund-raisers? Do we want to raise dues? What events and projects are we willing to support? Some things to think about. Stay tuned.

*A fly and flea flew into a flue,
said the fly to the flea 'what shall we do?'
'let us fly' said the flea
said the fly 'shall we flee?'
so they flew through a flaw in the flue.
(submitted by Steve Rentmeesters)*

THE ACCOUNTABILITY PROPOSAL

(Submitted by the Accountability Working Group. Moved and seconded at the FireCircle May 23rd. To be discussed and voted on at the FireCircle June 27th.)

The following will be added to the Living Document:

Men who join or renew their membership in the East Bay Circle of Men will affirm the following statement:

“I will hold myself accountable to the Purpose [or “Mission”], the Agreements, and the Standards of the East Bay Circle of Men, and I will hold other Circle of Men members accountable to the same.”

A LITTLE HISTORY: The East Bay Nation of Men was formed in 1991 by a group of men who had all done the Sterling Men's Weekend. Most of them were on active men's teams at the time. These men had decided to leave (or had been kicked out of) *The Men's Division* (the “official” Sterling graduate organization) for a variety of reasons. Let's just call it *irreconcilable differences* and leave it at that.

The point is, we shared a language and a culture that came from that intense Weekend experience. We were either on a men's team or looking to get on one. We were all committed to being our best and supporting other men to be their best. And there was a particular style of support that was our *modus operandi*.

When you hear stories about Henry Block or Harvey Rosen (or if you remember them), that's what comes up. Not only that, of course...they were complex characters, with many sides...as we all are. But Henry and Harvey clearly manifested the Sterling style of men supporting men.

It has been called ***hard support and ruthless compassion***. It was confrontational. Voices were raised. Sometimes the confrontation was physical. You may have heard the phrase, “*I went to a fight and a Bushwacker meeting broke out!*” The Bushwackers were known for that approach, sometimes referred to as *The Hammer*.

The point of the confrontation was to bring a man back into integrity when he had fallen short of a commitment that he had made to himself or to someone else...to bring him back into integrity with the man he had declared he wanted to be.

Was there some grandstanding and *machismo* and competition as part of the process sometimes? You bet! But behind all that was a deep caring about a man who you loved like a brother. All that was understood by both parties.

Of course, we lost a few men for whom that style of support was not their cup of tea.

Time passed.

Men showed up who had never heard of Justin Sterling. But they liked what we were about and became members. They didn't share the vocabulary and culture of the Weekend. And gradually the vocabulary and culture of EBNoM changed.

What changed was ***support***. We had never *explicitly* defined “support” because we all *implicitly* understood it based on our shared experience. But “support” in EBNoM became gradually diluted by the larger society's definition of the word.

So nowadays I could say to somebody like, for example, Michael Grubb [as he was 15 years ago], “*Yeah, man, I support you to get a good job and raise a family.*” But that doesn't mean much—I don't have any skin in that game. “*You go, girl!*” Yeah, so what?

THIS PROPOSAL addresses the fact that we *say* we support “Men, Teams, Families and Community” but we don't know the meaning of the word *support*. We *say* we have 10 “Standards” but we are not accountable to them. We are a laughingstock among men's groups.

If this proposal passes. will we have violence at the FireCircle? No, because something else has happened over the last 25 years. As individuals. and as a group, we have developed our emotional intelligence and honed our communication skills. Our compassion. We know that one size doesn't fit all.

If I were ever to see Michael Grubb neglecting his kids or disrespecting his wife, I could call him out at the FireCircle and stand a foot away from him and yell at him at the top of my voice. Because I know he can take it. And he's enough of a hard-head that it might take doing that to get through to him. And he knows he can do the same to me when I need it.

But for some of you men (*no names!*) that would be counterproductive. I wouldn't do that. I'd sit down with you in a quiet place and ask you, “*How ya doing, brother? What's going on? How you feeling? What do you need to get back on track?*”

And sometimes that might be a better style of support for me to receive as well.

I trust you to make that call.

—JT

FAITH

For me, faith is a spiritual quality. In my experience and for, any people its a difficult concept to learn.

It's not like learning something with our intellect - where you can learn from a book or a video. It's not like learning a new physical skill, like dancing. You can take a class and receive lessons. If you persevere and put in the time, you may not become Fred Estaire but you won't embarrass yourself.

But Faith is kind of mysterious. Because it is spiritual. Its not anti-intellectual. Nor is it unemotional. Its just different.

Once you have experienced it for yourself - then you start to understand. Other people's explanations and experience start to make sense. You still can't really explain it to someone who hasn't experienced it.

A good analogy is trying to explain what it feels like to "be in love". I mean the 'head over heels' feeling.

People who have experienced, even once know. But its like explaining purple to a blind person if a person has never felt it for themselves.

Through the years I have attended many different groups which discuss faith and spirituality. I started out fairly traditional church background. I have been fortunate to participate in a number of 12 Step groups since then and now EBCOM. It has really expanded my understanding of spirituality - what it is and what it isn't.

For me, there is another aspect of Faith that is similar to "being in love'. With Love, there is another person that we are focused on. All of the emotions are a result of the relationship.

I might offer somethings that have worked for me. In my Faith walk, I have found building my faith on a belief in a Higher Power (of my choosing) has helped my Faith get traction. Choosing to fake it until I make it. Choosing to affirm that my Higher Power is benevolent and will help me. It hasn't developed quickly. But now I experience good feelings in the way Love brings good feelings. Different types of feelings naturally. But very good ones. And as in Love, Faith can lift my feelings above my circumstances. Feelings of Joy, Peace, and Love - even in tough situations.

So I encourage you to pursue or keep pursuing Faith. You will reap the benefits if you don't give up.

Best,

Jack Kern

INITIATION NEWS

June, 2018 - Alan Wick, 2018 Initiation Team Leader

YOUR PART IN OUR INITIATION PROGRAM

You can do your part by showing an interest in the initiates, mentors and the initiation process. Your questions, suggestions and opinions are always welcome! How are the initiates doing with their dragon challenges and other initiation requirements? Please ask them.

OUR INITIATES AND MENTORS

Mike Fullmers, mentored by Jeff Randall
Kenn Wright, mentored by Michael Grubb
Ben Philippe, mentored by JT
Brian Carter, mentored by Robert Martin

FIRE CIRCLE CRUCIBLE SCHEDULE

April - Mike Fullmers - done
May - Kenn Wright - done
June - no crucible
July - Brian Carter
August - Ben Philippe

INITIATION ACCOUNTABILITY

Historically the Initiation Team has been accountable to NOBODY. Now we have tightened that up. Ultimately the Initiation Team is accountable to EBCOM membership. Our steward of the men is the chiefs, and the Legacy Chief, Bryan Weiss, is representing them in holding the Initiation Team accountable. To that end, Bryan and I have set up a weekly status call.

INITIATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Choose a mentor who agrees to support his initiation process.
2. Complete the initiation self-evaluation form with the support of his mentor.
3. Be on a team for the duration of his initiation process.
4. Interview two members he admires and report in the sacred circle on what he got out of the interviews.
5. Create and do a project to honor women. This can be honoring a specific woman or a group of women.
6. Receive and complete his Dragon Challenges.
7. Participate in his Crucible at a fire circle meeting.
8. Participate in the entire fall event on Sept. 7-9, 2018.

Upcoming Birthdays

Man	Birthday
Timothy, John	05/03/1944 (74)
Schimmel, Barry	05/12/1955 (63)
Rein, Steve	05/17/1947 (71)
Boyd, Aram	05/17/1958 (60)
Anderson, Kurt	05/31/1956 (62)
Kearney, Bill	06/08/1956 (62)
Duffy, Michael	06/13/1960 (58)
Seul, Mathias	06/20/1983 (35)
Wagner, Mark	06/25/1959 (59)
Bunker, Jay	07/08/1953 (65)
Wright, Kenn	07/11/1948 (70)
Buchanan, Timothy	07/14/1957 (61)
Randall, Jeffrey	07/23/1948 (70)
Moore, Aerin	07/24/1951 (67)
Peterson, Mark	07/27/1955 (63)
Fullmer, Mike	07/07/1966

East Bay Circle of Men: Chief List

Chief	Month
Weiss, Bryan (<i>Legacy</i>)	May
Randall, Jeffrey (<i>Membership</i>)	Jun
Rudolph, Bruce (<i>Spirit</i>)	Jul
Gelbart, Michael (<i>Communication</i>)	Aug
Thiel, Clayton (<i>Community Service</i>)	Sep
Garrison, Phillip (<i>Events</i>)	Oct
Block, David (<i>Finance</i>)	Dec

Team Rotation

June	
Newsletter	Not on a Team
Food	NUTs
Sacred Circle	ROCKS
Fire Circle	Scallywags
Fun & Childcare	JourneyMen

July	
Newsletter	10/90
Food	Not on a Team
Sacred Circle	NUTs
Fire Circle	ROCKS
Fun & Childcare	Scallywags

August	
Newsletter	B Team
Food	10/90
Sacred Circle	Not on a Team
Fire Circle	NUTs
Fun & Childcare	ROCKS

East Bay Circle of Men: Wallah List

Wallah Job	Member Name
Fire Wallah	Taylor, Michael
Health Wallah	Peck, Donald
Kitchen Wallah	(position Open)
New Man Wrangler #2	(position Open)
New Man Wrangler #3	(position Open)
Newsletter Wallah	(position Open)
Reach Out Point Man	Marchand, Roger
Team Health Wallah	Wick, Alan
Team Visit Wallah	Burleigh, Lewis
Web Developer	Ligda, Jay
Web Master	Wagner, Mark

help wanted-work wanted
 requests for support-events
 announcements-business cards

THE CIRCLE

UNCLASSIFIED

attaboys-blessings-quotes
 for sale-giveaways-jokes
 things wanted - info sought



mini-rants-reviews of books/movies/TV/art/performances/restaurants/gear/websites-
 housing-AND anything else 3½" max wide! Email to JT
 unclassified for next month

East Bay Circle of Men: Calendar of Upcoming Events

Date	Event Name	Times	Contact Person
06/09/2018	General Monthly Meeting (Guests Welcome) Where: Lake Chabot Park <i>Food by Not on a Team. Fun & Childcare by Scallywags. Sacred circle by NUTs</i>	8:00 AM until 10:00 AM breakfast at 7:15	Weiss, Bryan
06/27/2018	Fire Circle (No Guests) Where: Lake Chabot Park <i>Fire circle by ROCKS.</i>	7:00 PM until 9:00 PM	Weiss, Bryan
07/14/2018	General Monthly Meeting (Guests Welcome) Where: Lake Chabot Park <i>Food by 10/90. Fun & Childcare by ROCKS. Sacred circle by Not on a Team</i>	8:00 AM until 10:00 AM breakfast at 7:15	Randall, Jeffrey
07/25/2018	Fire Circle (No Guests) Where: Lake Chabot Park <i>Fire circle by NUTs.</i>	7:00 PM until 9:00 PM	Randall, Jeffrey
08/11/2018	General Monthly Meeting (Guests Welcome) Where: Lake Chabot Park <i>Food by B Team. Fun & Childcare by NUTs. Sacred circle by 10/90</i>	8:00 AM until 10:00 AM breakfast at 7:15	Rudolph, Bruce
08/22/2018	Fire Circle (No Guests) Where: Lake Chabot Park <i>Fire circle by Not on a Team.</i>	7:00 PM until 9:00 PM	Rudolph, Bruce

EBCoM

c/o Mark Dungey
240 Athol Ave. #201
Oakland CA 94606

EBCOM STANDARDS

- SHOW UP.
- KEEP CONFIDENTIALITY.
- SPEAK THE TRUTH.
- KEEP YOUR WORD.
- REMEMBER FAMILY & FRIENDS.
- HONOR MEN.
- RESPECT WOMEN.
- BE RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILDREN.
- DON'T QUIT.
- HAVE FUN!

NOTICE: THE MATERIAL HEREIN IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS. IT DOES NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF THE EAST BAY CIRCLE OF MEN. IF THE FRANK DISCUSSION AND GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF MEN'S ISSUES, INCLUDING MEN'S HUMOR, IS OFFENSIVE OR UPSETTING TO YOU PLEASE DO NOT READ THIS NEWSLETTER. THANK YOU.

The EBCoM general monthly meeting takes place on the 2nd Saturday of every month *except September* at Lake Chabot Park. All men are welcome. Breakfast is served 7:15 - 7:50 a.m. The meeting begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. & ends at 10:00 a.m. Meetings are held rain or shine, & lakeside temps can be chilly. Dress for it. *Directions follow:*

From I-580 East take the 150th/Fairmont exit, turn left @ 2nd stoplight. From I-580 West take the Fairmont exit, left at 1st lite, right @ next lite. Go up Fairmont, over the hillcrest, past Lake Chabot Dr on your left. Park for free on the street and into the park. OR Walk across the street and into the park.

▶ Drive in thru the gate, park inside, pay the fee & support the park. Walk to the far end of the parking lot and into the park toward the lake. Look to your left. You will see us there.

Map & newsletter masthead designed by Bob Hosch

EBCOM NEWSLETTER POLICY:

- (1) The newsletter will be published no later than Thursday night, nine days prior to the Saturday General Meeting.
- (2) Everything published in the newsletter must include the legible signature of the EBNOM member whose contribution it is.
- (3) There are no restrictions as to content. Submissions will be edited only to protect confidentiality.

I WILL PARTICIPATE IN AT LEAST ONE EBNOM-RELATED COMMUNITY SERVICE EVENT PER YEAR.
NEWLY INITIATED MEMBERS WILL BE ON AN EBNOM TEAM FOR AT LEAST 3 MONTHS.

THE THREE AGREEMENTS

THE PURPOSE OF THE EAST BAY CIRCLE OF MEN IS TO SUPPORT MEN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY.