



The Message

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

TRUSTED SERVANTS

INTERGROUP 5, INC APRIL 2008 TALLAHASSEE, FL

Intergroup

Chairman—Craig F—Living Sober
 Co-chairman—Mike F—New Hope
 Secretary—Carol H—New Hope
 Treasurer—Matt—Lake Jackson
 Literature—Greg S—Home
 Website—Andy E—Men's Faith
 Activities—Laura A—Central
 Membership—Vacant
 Newsletter—Vacant

District 5

DCM—Joe D—Downtown
 Alternate DCM—Susan E—Central
 Secretary—Craig F—Living Sober
 Treasurer—Matt N—Central

Standing Committees

Public Info—AC—Happy Hour
 CPC—Steve H—Central
 Treatment—Kevin T—Happy Hour
 Corrections—David G—End of the Road
 Grapevine—Vern D—Northside
 Accessibilities—Janis T—Willing
 Archives—Rebecca—Central
 Bridging the Gap—Danny P.—Central

"If I'm not the problem, then there is no solution."

When I came into the program, I had a lot of problems and most of them were your fault. My WIFE didn't understand me; my boss didn't appreciate me; the police didn't like it when I drove after just a few drinks (I was fine!), and on and on. If everyone would just get off my back, then I'd be fine I thought.

When I began working my program, I was introduced to the 4th Step - made a searching and fearless moral inventory - and my sponsor showed me how to make a list of all the persons and institutions I resented. Finally I could put down on paper and document how I had been wronged. Perfect! I thought. But then he slipped in a fourth column called, "My Part", and told me to document my role in all my resentments and interactions.

Now that was a tough pill to swallow. With his help though, and a willingness to be fearless and thorough, I was able to see that I did have a part in them all. And what a gift that turned out to be! I discovered that if it was all your fault - and I certainly couldn't control or change you - then I would forever be a victim and nothing would change. But if I took responsibility for my part - which was something I could control and change - then I was released from the bondage of resentment and was **finally free to live a new and better life. Thank God!**

Today I understand the wisdom in the quote: "If I'm not the problem, then there is no solution."

~Diz T.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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 Area Treasurer
 Marilyn B.
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TO BILL,
 Who taught me that the AA way of life
 is

Humble, *not necessarily meek*;
 Accepting, *not necessarily passive*;
 Loving, *not necessarily possessive*;
 Honest, *not necessarily ruthless*;
 Moral, *not necessarily righteous*;
 Envious, *not necessarily smug*;
 Spiritual, *not necessarily religious*;
 and
 Attractive, *not necessarily irresistible*.

Anonymous

AA Grapevine 1971

Prayer of St. Francis
(Bill Wilson's favorite prayer)

Lord, make me a channel of thy peace,
 that where there is hatred, I may bring love;
 that where there is wrong, I may bring the
 spirit of forgiveness;
 that where there is discord, I may bring har-
 mony;
 that where there is error, I may bring truth;
 that where there is doubt, I may bring faith;
 that where there is despair, I may bring hope;
 that where there are shadows, I may bring
 light;
 that where there is sadness, I may bring joy.
 Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort
 than to be comforted;
 to understand, than to be understood;
 to love, than to be loved.
 For it is by self-forgetting that one finds.
 It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.
 It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life.

Experience, Strength and Hope

Step Four

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

In Step 4, there are clear-cut directions. If studied, those directions ask us to uncover our grosser handicaps. Those are selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear. There is nothing in 4th Step that has me list where I might have been a good guy. I think there are two reasons for that: 1) Good things are not blocking me. In Step 4, we are told the purpose is to "face and be rid of the things in ourselves that have been blocking us. 2) Even if I did what I think are good things, I probably did them for the wrong reasons. I volunteered for many organizations that do good things--but I did it to get my name in the paper or get a plaque for my "I love me" wall. As far as the columns are concerned, I've seen numerous charts. The number of columns vary, but the one we use best comes straight from the book.

The fourth column was most illuminating for me when I found it! It's here that Joe & Charlie suggest, and we could catalog many others, just because the BB doesn't have it laid out verbatim doesn't mean that it's irrelevant. I ask the question, "what did I do to make the situation worse"?

Unlike the BB's chart of three columns, with my first inventory I asked one of my sponsors if I should list my actions alongside my attitudes. He told me to go ahead and that I'd find that many of my actions spiraled into a merry-go-round of either revenge planning or a treasure chest of incidents where I was (or thought I was) on the receiving end of someone else's actions/reactions. What I knew, going into the inventory, was this: **I figured that the God of my understanding didn't want me to stay on the emotional treadmill going downhill into self-pity, anger, or immobilizing fear.** The old guy, my sponsor, agreed—without me telling him he was right all along. Imagine that!

The BB's chart lists the conditions that drove our actions (again, reaction was the usual), and maybe it assumed that our actions would be listed. So, I look at what I caused, and with that, the resulting conditions I had to deal with. And, what others had to deal with and their expected retaliation toward me.

Time and time again, the Fourth Step answers my three "what did I endlessly continue to do, expecting a different result," "what was my part in harming others," and "what was my part in harming myself"--of course, drinking covers much of the third, but we've stopped drinking at this point. So the inventory goes a little deeper for detail. When I was finished with my first inventory, many tears were shed as I surveyed the damage.

But, I was no longer alone anymore--God knew all of it even before I put pen to paper, He agreed with me (thanks, Pa), and also knew I was ready to go somewhere with all of it.
~Diz T.

Tradition Four

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole. – Short Form, Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th Edition, page 562

With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount. – Long Form, Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th Edition, page 563

Taken at first glance, the short form of Tradition Four could be interpreted as permission for each group do whatever it thinks is appropriate, as long it is agreed upon through the group conscience process. Isn't that what "autonomous" means? I wasn't entirely sure, so I looked it up. I found as many definitions for the term in various dictionaries as I find opinions at a meeting. Not finding a clear answer, I turned back to my A.A. literature. In the 12 & 12 (page 147), it states that "we had been given the courage to declare each A.A. group an individual entity, strictly reliant on its own conscience as a guide to action." A little further down the page it goes on to say: "Every group had the right to be wrong."

I next ran across an excellent article from the Grapevine (Vol. 54, No. 11, April 1998) entitled "Autonomy Is Not An Excuse". This article focuses on the long form of the Tradition, better exploring what (in the author's opinion) constitutes internal affairs of a group, and actions that can affect other groups or A.A. as a whole. I wanted to reprint the entire article here instead of my blathering, but like a good alcoholic, I procrastinated and didn't get the reprint permissions in time. I would invite anyone seeking greater understanding of Tradition Four to read this Grapevine article.

So what did I learn? Remember, this is definitely my opinion and not the opinion of any group or A.A. Each group has complete control over things such as meeting format, how long the meetings run, what time the meetings are held, etc. Each group also has "the right to be wrong." Fortunately, the 12 Traditions are already established by other groups exercising that right and learning from their mistakes. Any group today can use that experience to avoid making similar errors. The "Foreward to Second Edition" (Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th Edition, page xix) says "that A.A.'s had to hang together or die separately." For me, the long form of Tradition Four conveys the idea that just as I couldn't stop drinking on my own, a group cannot completely fulfill its purpose without supporting A.A. as a whole through the service structure. A group can guarantee its autonomy, while contributing to the common welfare of all groups, simply by applying the other Traditions in all its affairs.

Happy trudging,

~David G.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT...

Alcoholics Anonymous, page 63, "In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry. We asked ourselves why we were angry. In most cases it was found that our self-esteem, our pocketbooks, our ambitions, our personal relationships (including sex) were hurt or threatened." Ambitions are often overlooked. Have I really looked at how my ambitions have been affected?

HEARD AT A MEETING...

- Sponsorship is like attending a rodeo, watching the rider on a Bronco. Whenever the rider tries to get the Bronco to do what he wants it to do, the Bronco bucks harder and longer usually bucking the rider off. After that, an assistant trainer grabs the reins of the Bronco, leads it to the stable area, letting him drink and feed. That's sponsorship in AA: the hard way or the AA way.
- Service work is a distraction from the obsession.

Intergroup 5 News

Intergroup 5 Meeting Minutes

Date: 03/05/2008

Groups Represented: Bradfordville, Central, Crawfordville, Downtown, Happy Hour, Home, Lake Jackson, Mustard Seed, New Hope, Men's Faith, Open Door and Singleness of Purpose. 16 people attended, representing 9 groups.

Secretary's Report: Amendment made to last minutes. Kevin T. is serving as chair for the Traditions Extravaganza this year. This is his first time chairing it. Approved and accepted as amended.

Treasurer's Report: Approved and accepted.

Office Report: Volunteers are still needed! Please call the office. The report is reflected in *The Message*.

Literature Report: Books and pamphlets are available for sale to all groups. Please call the office. Corrections materials are labeled with pink. Please do not take these, as they belong to Corrections and are being stored for them in the office for the time being.

Activities Report: Pavillion 13 has been paid for and reserved for the Founder's Day Picnic on June 21st at Tom Brown Park. It will be "pot luck" style.

Web Committee Report: Please view the IG5 web site (www.intergroup5.org) and send comments or constructive suggestions and meeting errors such as times, locations, etc. Debbie C. Suggestions or comments on the web site can be made to Andy at: www.revivalcreative.com/aaindex.html or Email: andy@revivalcreative.com.

District Report: Traditions Extravaganza will be held at Jackson Lodge on Apalachee Parkway on April 19th. More information TBA. Look for the fliers at meetings. Corrections Committee: Pink Can donations will be kept separate from District funds to alleviate conflicts. Also, you can make contributions payable to: District 5 Correctional Facilities.

Old Business: Information on the past Founder's Day Picnic is on the web. To have your name on the "12 Step Call List" you must have at least one year of continuous sobriety.

New Business: IG5 will present a 30 minute workshop/panel at the Traditions Extravaganza on the basics of making a 12-step call.

**Submitted in Grateful Service,
Carol H.**

March 2008 Treasurer's report

General Fund	
Checking:	
Beginning 2/29/2008 balance	<u>\$893.38</u>
Contributions:	
Appalachicola Bay	20.00
Came to Believe	442.88
Central	200.00
District 5	240.00
Flint River Roundup	100.00
Happy Hour	229.67
Lake Jackson	50.00
Lloyd New Hope	50.00
Mustard Seed	54.00
Singleness of Purpose	40.00
Quincy Phone listing refund	31.65
Total Contributions	1458.20

Less:

Disbursements:	
Answering service	203.50
Office Coord. Travel/Rel. Exp	147.62
Internet monthly charge	51.96
Printing Newsletter/ W&W	96.75
Rent	257.01
Office supplies	54.90
Picnic Pavilion Rental	120.00
Telephone	45.94
Total Expense Disbursements	<u>977.68</u>

Ending Balance 3/31/2008 **1373.90**

Prudent Reserve Savings:

Beginning 2/29/2008 balance	955.44	
Interest earned	0.00	
Transfer to General Fund	0.00	(800 x 3 = 2400)
Ending Balance 3/31/2008	<u>\$955.44</u>	Reserve \$1,445 below prudent

Literature Fund

Beginning 2/29/2008 Balance	<u>1,700.46</u>
Literature sales	358.85
Sales Tax collected	26.93
Total Receipts	385.78
Literature Purchases	1,021.00
Total Expenditures	1,021.00

Ending Balance 3/31/2008 **\$1,065.24**

CORRECTIONS CORNER (Apr.08)

As shown below, the need still exists for more people to carry the message into correctional facilities in our district.

- Bay City Work Camp (Carrabelle), Monday nights, currently have 1 volunteer
- FCI Tallahassee, Tuesday nights, currently have 2 volunteers
- Franklin Correctional Institution (Carrabelle), Friday nights, currently have 1 volunteer
- Jefferson Correctional Institution (Monticello), Thursday nights, currently have 2 volunteers
- Leon Co. Jail, Wed.(Men)/Fri.(Women), currently have 1 (Men) and 2 (Women) volunteers
- Madison Correctional Institution, Monday, currently have 1 volunteer
- Tallahassee Work Release Center, Tuesday night, currently have 1 volunteer
- Wakulla Correctional Institution (Woodville), Sunday morning, currently have 5 volunteers

These are the corrections meetings I am in contact with. If you would like to get involved, or have updated info for me, please call me at: (850) 590-3087, or just show up for our next committee meeting on April 13, 2008 at 3pm (909 Gadsden St.).

In Service,
~David G.

Events and Happenings

INTERGROUP 5 NEWS

The following 48 calls were answered by volunteers:

12step - 2, Al-anon - 2, AA info - 7, Meeting info - 30, Misc - 6, Speaker - 1

The office coordinator took an additional 20 messages from the hot line answering service for a variety of requests including literature sales, group startup assistance and meeting information. The answering service had 0 calls over the base number of our service agreement. We are still pursuing alternatives to our current arrangement but comparing prices, we have the "most affordable" service around. There were some hangups on the answering service too which leads me to think some one wanted to talk to a human, not voice mail. Perhaps it is time to revisit sharing night shifts by forwarding to cell phones. (Not to strike up any rivalries but Gainesville has there phones covered 7 X 24 by volunteers that donate about a night a month to answer hot line calls on their cell phone if they can do it, we can too!)

We need more volunteers - call Rob K at 545-3833.

We have plenty of slots for day or night. Look for the Intergroup Office Coordinator's Corner for more detail on available times coming soon to a web page near you.

Web statistics - 10,780 hits (from search engines, etc) with 4814 pages sent from the Intergroup 5 website - slightly higher than average month of web site visits and more than double the page sent count for March 2007!! The intergroup web site activity statistics have been steadily growing since tracking the numbers at our host site - rapidly at first then leveling off with smaller increments of growth. Way to go Web Committee!

Want to know an easy way to start giving back to the program that saved your life? Do you have 6 months of sobriety and maybe are not quite ready to sponsor? Do you long for that feeling of peace that service work can give to those who actually do it? Just a suggestion: Volunteer to answer the phone at the Intergroup5 office. There are few better chances to introduce (or point) someone to sobriety than when they call out of desparation and despair and they reach another alcoholic on the other end of the phone line. You can be the person receiving the call and carrying the message of recovery to the still suffering alcoholic. Even if it is as seemingly trivial as giving meeting time information or directions, you could very well be saving another alcoholic's life. Plus the rewards are great - while increasing your own chances of staying sober, you can get a multitude of other things done while manning the AA hot-line.

CURRENT EVENTS

SOUTHSIDE GROUP HAS MOVED!

Beginning April 1 the Southside Group will meet at CASA every evening at 8 p.m. The Southside Saturday/Sunday 10:30 a.m. meeting will be merged with the Living Sober 11:00 a.m. meeting.

Traditions Extravaganza
April 19, 2008, 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Jackson Masonic Lodge
Apalachee Parkway
Tallahassee, FL

2008 Founder's Day Florida Style
June 6-8, 2008
Tallahassee, FL

2008 Founder's Day Picnic
Saturday, June 21, 2008
Tom Brown Park
Pavilion 13
Tallahassee, FL

Happy A.A. March Anniversary

Bradfordville Group: Shel D. - 1, Tracy I. - 7, Dana B. - 13
Central Group: Tommy C. - 1, Adam - 2, Roland - 2, Randy M. - 3, R.E. - 4, Rob G. - 4, Sharla B. - 8, Will C. - 14, Ron D. - 15, Jack R. - 29

Conscious Contact, Living Sober, Happy Hour: Alan B. - 1, Colleen H. - 3, David G., - 3, Suzy P. - 3, Glori - 4, Rock - 4, Maddy - 5, Nathan - 15, Earl W. - 23, Roger T.

Home Group: Greg S. - 16

Mustard Seed: Julie W. - 1, James R. - 2

Open Door: Debbie C. - 2

The Man in the Glass

Author unknown

When you get what you want in your struggle for self
And the world makes you king for a day,
Just go to the mirror and look at yourself
And see what that man has to say.

For it isn't your father or mother or wife
Whose judgment upon you must pass.
The fellow whose verdict counts most in you life
Is the one staring back from the glass.

You may be like Jack Horner and chisel a plum
And think you're a wonderful guy.
But the man in the glass says you're only a bum
If you can't look him straight in the eye.

He's the fellow to please-never mind all the rest,
For he's with you clear to the end.
And you've passed your most dangerous, difficult test
If the man in the glass is your friend.

You may fool the whole world down the pathway of years
And get pats on the back as you pass.
But your final reward will be heartache and tears
If you've cheated the man in the glass.