



The Message

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

TRUSTED SERVANTS

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—Adam G—Central
Newsletter—Sandy M & Julie W—
Mustard Seed
12 Step--Jeff D--Central

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

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INTERGROUP 5, INC JUNE 2008 TALLAHASSEE, FL

Today is Sunday May 11, 2008 - Mother's Day. I was in a meeting earlier and someone spoke of the current warning that tornados could be touching down at any minute and I smiled. I smiled because exactly 5 years ago today, my tornado of alcoholism touched down in an AA meeting on Gadsden Street, a place where it could finally begin to lose its deadly power. It was Sunday May 11, 2003 - Mother's Day. Nothing particularly eventful had transpired to push me into the room that day. I had a conversation Saturday morning with my sister who earnestly said with all the love in her heart that it killed her to see me so miserable and that she didn't think I had to be that way. And, perhaps, AA might help. That night I did something I had never done. I made a decision not to take a drink because I feared I may need to quit. The next afternoon, after twenty years of drinking, I found myself in what seemed like the worst spot on earth - the back row of Central Group of Alcoholics Anonymous as I spoke out loud for the first time to all of you (and quietly to my innermost self) the overwhelming truth that had become my life: "My name is Bret and I am an alcoholic." I had begun to be convinced of the first step.

Uncharacteristically, I did what you said, and came back the next day. When I told you I was terrified of the physical withdrawals, you promised me I could live through the day without drinking. And I did. When I was mourning the loss of my best friend alcohol, you suggested that I focus on what I was gaining instead of what I was losing. And I did. These things kept me from drinking one day at a time. When I came in wondering if I could go home that night and just drink once more, you told me that I probably had another drunk in me, maybe even many more, but I may not have another recovery. That grabbed me deeply and helped me to really begin to own that first step. When I told you that I just could not do this god business and this wasn't going to work for me, you told me that I didn't have to leave and that it could work. You told me that there were a few people who didn't believe in god and were practicing the program and staying sober and that I may want to listen to them. Thus began the hope that I needed which over the next couple of months grew into the second step. In short, you gave me what I needed to save my life - in bites that I could digest and a language that I could hear.

When three meetings a day and all the Big Book reading I could do wasn't getting it anymore and I was sure that not drinking was going to drive me insane (the unmanageability in the first step and part of the point of that second step) you gently suggested and loudly shouted, "Work the Steps!" So I did the best I could do with the third step and made a decision to go ahead with the action of the program. I did an inventory; though I was sure I no longer had resentments. After all, I had been in AA a few months and had mastered them, right? I hadn't mastered any of them. I had grown new ones. When I did a fifth step it felt so good, I went home and thought, "I should have a drink to keep this feeling going." I didn't take the drink, and an unbelievable promise came true - I haven't struggled with wanting to drink since. But I also didn't stop there. I read the couple of paragraphs in the book on the sixth and seventh steps. I made an amends list. I did some half measure amends. Hardly a solid program and I kept coming to meetings.

(cont.)

Experience, Strength and Hope

Step Six

*Were entirely ready to have God remove
all these defects of character*

I am thankful for this day of sobriety. And thankful that although I've worked, and continue to work, all 12 Steps, I am convinced of the importance of being able to stop and discern which step I'm on at any given day in recovery.

Step 1 and Step 3, I suppose, will remain forever familiar, as life always reminds me, sometimes gently, sometimes painfully, of my powerlessness and the Source of my restoration. But Step 6 also consists of those same reminders - my powerlessness and God's sovereignty. It seems that I have to be pummeled into being entirely ready, convinced that all of my "Rubik's Cube" attempts will get me nowhere and that God alone has the power to remove my defects. . .to restore me to Him. The 6th Step is one of 12 that constantly reminds me of my place in this world. I am the child; He is the Father. I am thankful for this day of sobriety.

Elizabeth C.

Tradition Six

*An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the
A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest
problems of money, property and prestige divert us from
our primary purpose.*

I am thankful that even though the early members wanted to share their way of life because of the miracles they were experiencing, they learned through their attempts that they could not endorse any related enterprise no matter how good. They learned that they could not all be all things to all men and that they could not lend the A.A. name to any outside activity (paraphrased from the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Table of Contents). In keeping true to their primary goal, the program of Alcoholics Anonymous has been around for almost 70 years! I am thankful that the program of Alcoholics Anonymous was here to carry the message to me . . . an alcoholic who was still suffering! I am so thankful for A.A. and the commitment to the purity of focus.

Julie W.

(cont from page 1)

Then an extraordinary thing happened. Within six months of not drinking and beginning to trudge through the steps (though smugly thinking I was getting close to mastering this deal and wrapping it up) my life fell apart. I experienced the most terrifying and humiliating events that I could imagine. The details are unimportant. It was my perspective that it was so devastating that mattered. And that is what I have found the program addresses. It doesn't necessarily change my external situations and conditions. It changes my perspective, my internal attitudes and ideas, which are usually the problem to begin with. A marvelous transformation occurred in the midst of this chaos - my practice of the AA program changed. It shifted from a program to stop drinking into a design for living to change the way that I view and approach life. I began to read the section on the eleventh step from our text every morning as a way to begin my day and began experiencing some peace and direction. I began to review my day each evening before I went to bed and started to see some progress and develop some gratitude. I began to employ the spiritual axiom from the tenth step in the 12 & 12 that states whenever I am disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong with me and started to develop more honesty and see myself more clearly. I did this a lot since I was always disturbed. The benefit is that it keeps me involved with the program all day, every day. Coming back to inventory numerous times through the day keeps me practicing the actions of all of AA's twelve steps. I shifted from mechanically forcing the 4th to 9th steps to fluidly living the 10th to 12th steps. The program moved from my head to my heart. This allows me to weave these principles into the fiber of my being as deeply as I had knotted and tangled the fear, self pity, jealousy, anger, confusion, misery, hopelessness and alcohol. This grows assurance where there was insecurity; joy where there was misery; forgiveness where there was judgment; love where there was hatred; service where there was worthlessness; gratitude where there was bitterness.

This once terrified, overwhelmed and paralyzed shell of a person now finds joy, peace and usefulness as a daily experience of life. Where once I awoke (or came to) dreading the horrors of the day, I now look forward to the new opportunities that each day affords. Where I once passed out in hopeless desperation, I now relax into sleep with peace and gratitude. For years I lived only to drink. I now live for the unlimited possibilities for happiness and giving those presents themselves daily. I am grateful today for the people of AA who showed me how to stop drinking and who continue to guide me in this design for living that really works as I work it. I am thankful that I am now one of you with something to offer and to pack into the stream of life. I am finding that I can walk peacefully through whatever comes along. I am learning to embrace life with gratitude however life may show up on any given day. I am discovering that it is in giving that I receive. I watch with amazement as my favorite promise of the book unfolds before me each day: As I follow the dictates of a higher power (which for me is to practice the principles and do the action of each of AA's 12 steps in all of my affairs) I presently live in a new and wonderful world, no matter what my present circumstances...and I get to do all of this without having to drink!

Bret

EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS

INTERGROUP 5 NEWS

Web statistics: 4719 pages sent from Intergroup 5 website - averaging with other months since Nov 2007, and more than twice the number of pages sent in May 07! Way to go web team!

The following 29 calls were answered by volunteers at the Intergroup 5 office phones:

12step - 1
AI-Anon - 0
AA info - 2
Meeting info - 15
Misc. - 1
Speakers - 1

Thanks to everyone who has made and continues to make this most valuable contribution to local AA. Many trained volunteers have had schedule changes for the summer and are no longer able to serve at this time. We could still use more daytime help so volunteer if you can. Not the most glamorous service work but essential for our community. 6 months sobriety requested. The 12 Step call list is being updated by Jeff D of Central group, please contact him (or myself) if you wish to perform the most immunity-from-drink-assuring service work there is. 1 year of sobriety required.

The office coordinator picked up about 12 messages - 7 of those were hang-ups. We have taken action to update the Intergroup 5's Embarq phone account named individuals so we may check on some enhanced features that could better serve our needs at a more affordable rate than the current answering service. Additionally we are investigating another professional answering service whose rates may be as much as one half the current company's charges. Forwarding to cell phones for night time coverage is being examined as well.

The Summer 2008 Where and When has been posted on the Intergroup5.org website and is available in hard copy at the intergroup office. Please send any corrections/additions/deletions etc., to:

office-coordinator@intergroup5.org or
webmaster@intregroiup5.org

A heartfelt thanks to all the groups that continue to support Intergroup in its mission to help carry the message to those who are still suffering.

rob k 545.3833

CURRENT EVENTS

2008 Founder's Day Florida Style***

June 6-8, 2008
Residence Inn Marriott
600 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, FL

2008 Founder's Day Picnic

Saturday, June 21, 2008
Tom Brown Park
Pavilion 13
Tallahassee, FL

***Do you karaoke? FDFS is hosting karaoke Friday and Saturday nights. Sign up now with your song list so we can have it ready for you to belt out. info@foundersdayflorida.org, office-coordinator @intergroup5.org or (850) 545-DUDE

Happy A.A. May Anniversary

Bradfordville Group: Vanessa - 5

Central Group: Cameron F. - 1, Greg G. - 1, Kathryn H. - 1, Kris C. - 1, Randi B. - 1, Anne - 2, Pat D. - 2, Heather D. - 2, Traci - 3, Susie - 3, Thomas - 3, Sean M. - 4, Bret - 5, Jimmie - 7, Diana - 10, Pat - 10, Floyd - 13, Nancy - 20, Reed - 20, Elizabeth C. - 21, Carol S. - 26, Clark - 26, Dave 36

Happy Hour, Living Sober, Conscious Contact: Gary M. - 4, James R. - 4, Donna W. - 7, Judy - 21

Home Group: Joel A. - 3, Kevin W. - 10, Len H. - 27

Mustard Seed: Bettye - 21, Diz T. - 27

Night Owl: Heather D. - 2

Southside: Jim W. - 4

HISTORICAL A.A. JUNE DATES

June 1946 - 24,000 plus members

June 1947 - "AA Preamble" first printed in Grapevine.

June 1949 - Capt. Jack C. formed AA Seamen's Club in NYC.

June 1953 - "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" published.

June 1, 1949 - Anne Ripley Smith, Bob's wife, died.

June 5, 1939 - New York Times favorably reviewed the Big Book.

June 7, 1938 - Bill & Lois have argument, Bill almost slips.

June 10, 1935 - Dr. Bob has last drink (some say it may have been on June 17 based on date of medical convention he attended.).

June 11, 1935 - Dr. Bob suggests he and Bill start working with other alcoholics.

June 15, 1938 - One of the first documented uses of the term Alcoholics Anonymous.

June 16, 1938 - Jim B's last drink, ("Vicious Cycle") from Big Book

June 18, 1940 - Meeting held in first 'AA clubhouse', at 334½ W. 24th St, NYC.

June 19, 1942 - NY paper reports 6 cops sent to AA are sober.

Police commissioner credits AA with "fewer suicides" on his files

June 21, 1944 - The A.A. Grapevine established.

June 26, 1935 - Bill D, AA#3, had last drink before being admitted to hospital.

June 28, 1935 - Bill and Dr. Bob visit Bill D, first "Man on the Bed." He becomes AA#3.

June 30, 1941 - Jack C & Ruth Hock brought the 'Serenity Prayer' to Bill's attention.

Diz T.