



The Message

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

TRUSTED SERVANTS

INTERGROUP 5, INC March 2008 TALLAHASSEE, FL

Intergroup

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

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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The Easier, Softer Way

Born to loving, non-drinking parents I was given all opportunities to excel scholastically, socially and spiritually. I still felt put out when I was told what to or not to do. Yard work, house chores or homework, I felt like a victim and pouted like it. I carried this attitude through prep and trade school. I tried alcohol during these formative years, Booze allowed me to justify this "scorned with life" attitude, so I added alcohol to my habit of isolation and pouting. I was willing to do some life things: summer jobs, driver license, and trade school/career. Even buy property with a house. I could believe the lie. Also, it was "no big deal" when I was arrested at 22 for DUI and leaving the scene, drunk at my mother's funeral, nearly shot during a police drug raid, turned my remaining family away from me with my "partying" even called myself an alcoholic, which meant to me, drink as much I can as often as I wanted. It's just the "price I pay to party" I told myself. After this year of consequences, I just wanted to drink with-out being bothered or bothering any body. Isolation with intoxication, that was my goal, and I achieved it by age 23. Since I was alone by choice, I now called myself "functioning" instead of partying. I achieved this by narrowing my options: work, liquor store, and house. Or money, booze, isolation, blackout. This continued fifteen years. Hopeless and helpless and I didn't even know it. I remarried a woman I had divorced five years earlier. After a very short time living with me, she said to me "A.A is the only thing that will save your life". Fortunately this is a progressive illness; things did get bad enough, even for me to want something different. So I started going to meetings. This was August of 2003.

Meetings instead of liquor store. That was the plan. I didn't think I needed a sponsor guy to work the steps. I'd just do them as I found extra time. I did have a ninety day red chip as a goal. I didn't drink three months, picked up that chip and knew I had the answer to sobriety. Two nights after meeting my red chip goal, my then wife said "you care more about A. A. than me". My response "fine I'll go get drunk". This will show her, I thought as I sped off to the quick mart. I was back on the money-booze-blackout plan. Six months of being the roaring tornado; ended April 12 2004. Now, I was scared not only of the blackouts but what I would do when, not if I had them. So back to meetings I went. Again the red chip was my finish line goal. I'm grateful I wasn't the first alcoholic to think there was an easier way to stay sober. A sober member at 909 had seen me the year before and asked me this time at a meeting after the meeting "How are you doing"? I said the obligatory "fine" then he asked "what step are you on"? I said I was "kind of on the fourth step". He asked "Have you got a sponsor"? I answered "well there was this guy I was thinking about asking". He turned away from me quickly and at the same time added "you're going to get drunk" This did two things for me. It made me mad and it scared me. I later heard this is called "threatening a drunk with his own experience".

But it worked for me because I called that guy and asked a most difficult question. Will-you-be-my s-p-o-n-s-o-r? He said yes and asked me to talk with him. Our first meeting, he told me he couldn't keep me sober and I couldn't keep him sober. That I could fire he or he could fire me. Soon after this meeting I started calling him daily or seeing him at meetings. An early conversation he asked me, "do you want to stop drinking"? Then, "are you willing to go to any length to stay stopped"? I slowly said yes to both questions and continued taking the twelve steps of A.A. by asking for suggestions daily, what to do next?

(Cont. on page 2)

Experience, Strength and Hope

Step Three

“Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of GOD as we understood him”

I'm able to forgive the intellectual arrogance and extreme sexism of the phrase "God as we understand Him", perhaps because Step Three has become one of the foundations of my daily life and because its fundamental concept is so brilliant. Its crucial importance to success in developing sustainable and satisfying sobriety is made clear early in the chapter on the Third Step in the "Twelve and Twelve": "In fact, the effectiveness of the whole A.A. program will rest upon how well and earnestly we have tried to come to 'a decision to turn our will and our lives over...'. This idea is repeated twice in the rest of the chapter, in case we missed the point, as so many very evidently do. When we decide to turn our will over to Higher Power, we retain the right and the capacity to gather information and impression, to analyze and to come to a decision that seems the best thing to do under those circumstances. The will we wish to turn over is the "self-will run riot" that dominated our lives (and the lives of those around us), the will of "my way or the highway", the will of the alcoholic who is "self-centered in the extreme". The will we want to minimize toward non-existence is the will of the ego, the will that wants to keep us separated from others, the will that is incapable of recognizing a power greater than itself, much less to relax into that power, to become a part of that power, rather than apart from it. Unless we can increasingly abandon this kind of will, imprisoned in selfishness, we will be unable to do anymore than go through the motions of the rest of the work of recovery, all style and no substance, essentially meaningless activity. For all the remaining Steps of recovery are designed to diminish selfishness, to reduce ego to a realistic and manageable role, to gain "true independence of the spirit". Once that finally happens, "sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly" (usually slowly), we realize how any sacrifices we have made of our ego have been richly rewarded beyond any expectations our ego could have had. We recognize our ego, our personality, for what it really is: a collection of essentially childish and adolescent attitudes and ideas that have long since ceased to serve our adulthood in any productive way. Recovery is our finally maturing into our full potential as humans, and Step Three makes that possible.

-Mike L.

Tradition Three

The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.

"When you guys wrote that sentence, did you mean it or didn't you?" This statement was made by an atheist who was being escorted out of an AA meeting for heresy. The 12 and 12 says: "You are an AA member if you say so. You can declare yourself in; nobody can keep you out. . . . we leave it to every newcomer to decide for himself whether he is an alcoholic or whether he should join us." When faced with the decision of whether to exclude someone, we must ask: "What are we really afraid of?" "What should the group do?" "What would the Master do?"

This recently came up in what I would have considered my home group. Back in September 2007 my daughter, whom I haven't seen in 5 ½ years, came to live with me and my husband. She is 18 years old and came here to rebuild a relationship with me. She had been attending meetings with me, and I asked the group and to individuals if this was a problem. Each time I asked, they said no. The last time I brought this up at this same meeting, I heard a lot about ego and that it would be humiliating if someone found out they were in an AA meeting. Nothing was said about Tradition Three. My daughter does have a problem with alcohol: her mother is an alcoholic. If I have worked my steps, I shouldn't feel humiliation about being an alcoholic. I should be humble enough to reach out my hand and welcome someone who has the potential for being an alcoholic. For my part, I determined not to hold a resentment over this or to give up on the AA program. I respected the group's decision to exclude my daughter, and indirectly, myself, from that closed meeting. Instead I found other groups which are more tolerant of our situation. As Bill W. once said: "I love Alcoholics Anonymous. I love being sober. For me, the only criterion for belonging in a closed meeting of AA is whether a person wants to be there or not. I don't think it threatens my sobriety or the future of AA if I simply try to welcome whoever comes, love him, help him, and invite him to keep coming back."

-Phanie H.

(Cont. from page 1)

An early turning point in my sobriety happened shortly after this sponsor connection. My then wife wasn't too happy I had stopped buying booze and booze enhancers. Our marriage built on chemicals disintegrated into nightly confrontations. Instead of alcohol and violence, my answer was to get away from her for the night. I went to work and made myself a pallet on the floor.

Because of the A. A. program, not just meetings, I had a defense against my old reaction of booze and violence. I had tried this next right action plan and the result was continued sobriety, freedom and spiritual growth.

Today my plans are very similar to those first months of one day at a time living. Some plans of spiritual action are: A prayer for help to start the day. Being kind to others and myself. A.A. meetings instead of the liquor store. Continuing to ask for suggestions from my sponsor. Utilizing the serenity prayer through out the day. Doing service work with and for others in A.A. Reading A.A. literature and the Grapevine. A prayer of thanks to end each day. Believing these actions work based on my own experience helps me want to continue growing as I meet new people that are placed in my path. I have the opportunity to befriend each one and to keep the friends I already have.

Matt C.

Intergroup 5 News

Intergroup 5 Meeting Minutes

Date: 02/06/2008

Groups Represented: Bradfordville, Central, Crawfordville, Downtown, Home, Lake Jackson, Living Sober, Men's Faith, Mustard Seed, New Hope, Open Door, and Singleness of Purpose. 15 people attended.

Secretary's Report: Approved and accepted.

Treasurer's Report: Approved and accepted.

Office Report: Report is in The Message. Volunteers are still needed! Please call Rob K. at the office.

Literature Report: Books and pamphlets are available for sale to all groups. Please call the office.

Activities Report: A discussion concerning the Founders' Day Picnic arose. Please see New Business for details.

Web Committee Report: Please view the IG5 web site (www.intergroup5.org) and send comments or constructive suggestions to Andy at: www.revivalcreative.com/aindex.html or Email: andy@revivalcreative.com. Please visit the site and the calendar for updated groups and new meetings.

District Report: Traditions Extravaganza will take place on April 19, 2008. Location TBA. Groups are being asked to participate as last year. Kevin T. will chair again this year. Danny P., Corrections Chair, reports that the Public Information, Bridging the Gap and Corrections Committees are meshing well. Detox still needs bridging.

Old Business: None to discuss.

New Business:

There are three new meetings: (1) A Big Book Study with Ed V. is ongoing at Townsend Treatment Center on Wednesday Street, behind Wendy's on Capital Circle, NE. (2) A women's meeting, Laughter and Tears, is meeting at CASA on Monday Road on Thursday mornings at 10:30. (3) Crawfordville Group has a Newcomers meeting On Wednesday evenings at 6:30. (All new meetings will be listed on the www.intergroup5.org web site with a disclaimer.)

Matt C. brought up the fact that there is a conflict on the date discussed for the Founders Day Picnic with the Founders Day Florida Style conference this year. A motion was made to reschedule the Picnic for Saturday, June 21, 2008. Groups will be asked to participate in a "pot luck style" event with a local speaker. The motion was passed. More details to follow.

Information to go into The Message can be submitted to the Newsletter Editors @ message@intergroupe.org up to the Sunday before the Intergroup 5 monthly meeting which takes place on the first Wednesday of each month.

Rob K. (Office Coordinator) is itemizing the "calls received" at IG5 to try and see what times the Office needs volunteers the most.

All Group IG Representatives are reminded to please attend the monthly meeting. If your group is not represented, please elect someone to attend. We need your input!

Your opportunity for service work is calling your name!!! Paul, Coordinator for the 12 Step List, needs you. Contact him at 443-8473 to add your name to the revised and updated List of 12 Step Volunteers.

Southside Group could really use your support! Check out their meeting schedules.

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

Intergroup 5 Treasurer's Report

General Fund Activity

	Feb	Year to Date
Alligator Point		
Apalachicola Bay Serinity	20.00	
Bradfordville	200.00	
Brown Bag (Panacea)	30.00	
Came to Believe		
Capital City		
Carabelle		
Central	200.00	
Grateful (detox)		
District 5		
DownTown		
Havana Sunday Night		
Happy Hour		
Home group		
Lake Jackson		
Lloyd New Hope		
Living Sober		
Men's Faith		
Miracle Sunday nite		
Mustard Seed	65.00	
Nite Owl	256.00	
Northside		
Open Door		
Pathfinders		
Powder no Puff		
Quincy		
Singleness of Purpose		
Southside		
Willing		
Westside		
Contribution totals	771.00	1294.10
Anonymous Bequest/Donations		0.00
Faithful Fivers		25.00
Picnic/ Holliday Dinner Receipts		0.00
Flint River Roundup		0.00
Transfer from prudent reserve		0.00
All fund sources totals	771.00	1319.10
Due from Lit. fund		
Expenses:		
Rent	257.01	514.02
Answering service	203.50	407.00
Telephone	45.52	91.04
Internet monthly charge	51.96	103.92
Office coordinator travel	147.62	295.24
Adjustment to above		0.00
Printing where/when	109.75	187.50
Supplies/Paper/Printing		24.50
Picnic/Holiday dinner expense		0.00
State corp fee		61.25
Office Insurance		0.00
Expense totals	815.36	1684.47
Literature fund activity:		
Literature Sales	609.28	1406.63
Sales tax collected	46.44	106.78
Literature Purchases	767.40	767.40
2007 Sales Tax remission		
Due to general fund		
Interest earned		

Events and Happenings

Current Events

New Women's A.A. Meeting
(Open/Discussion)
at CASA-12 Clubhouse,
2410 Monday Rd.,
on *Thursdays* from
10:30-11:30 a.m.
Begins next Thursday, Jan. 17, 2007

Monday 8:00 am - Big Book
Saturday 10:00 am - Open discussion
Both of the meetings are located at Townsend Recovery Center, 2260 Wednesday Road in Tallahassee (near the old Casa). This is a new treatment center and Tallahassee and needs meeting support. Both meetings are open.
Thank you and please contact me with any questions.
Danny Phillips
850-228-3749

Looking for ladies to do service work (by attending Sunday evening at 5:30 at the Behavioral Unit at TMH and on Saturday night at 8:00 at Detox) to provide a female's perspective on the process of getting and staying sober using AA and the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. Contact AC at : 510-9122.

The Singleness of Purpose Group that normally meets at The First Baptist Church on Woodville Hwy has moved to 1707 Old Woodville Hwy. Directly behind the old meeting place. At The Woodville United Methodist Church. Tuesdays at 7p

The Quincy AA group is no longer meeting at the Apalachee Mental Health Center. We are at the Centenary United Methodist Church, 206 North Madison Street, Quincy, in the fellowship hall across the street from the main church.
Contact: Jason Thompson 850-508-8145 Quincy Group

Flint River Roundup is March 14-16 in Albany, Ga.
Workshop starts at 4 PM Friday

CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESS!!!

February Phone Report (34 Calls Received by Volunteers)



3—12th Step
0—Al-anon
7—AA Info
18—Meeting Information
—Answering Service
6—Miscellaneous

4280 — Web Statistics

We need more Volunteers!
Call Rob K. @ 545-3833

Corrections Corner

Next Committee Meeting: March 9th, 3pm at 909 Gadsden St.

"Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. This is our twelfth suggestion: Carry this message to other alcoholics!" - pg.89, Alcoholics Anonymous

Members who are involved with carrying meetings to correctional facilities in our district often quote this passage when asked about "what they get out of it".

Why A.A.s Carry the Message Behind the Walls

"Many A.A. members are unaware of the important work being carried out by corrections committees. To those involved, however, corrections work is an opportunity to carry the A.A. message to the confined alcoholic who wants to live sober, one day at a time. Through a corrections committee working with corrections personnel, alcoholics are reached who might never otherwise find the A.A. program." - pg.4, Corrections Workbook, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services

Personally, my service work with the Correctional Facilities Committee has been a vital part of my recovery. A lot of the meetings I have attended at correctional facilities have been among the most powerful and most influential in my own spiritual journey. I'd like to invite all members in District 5 to make this area of service a part of your own recovery. There are opportunities to serve other than just carrying meetings inside. Come to our next committee meeting and find out how you can help yourself through helping others. The Correctional Facilities, Treatment and Bridging-the-Gap committees meet every 2nd Sunday, 3pm at 909 Gadsden Street. If you can't make the meeting, give me a call and I can give you the information (850.590.3087).

Also, the way we handle the Pink Can Fund for corrections literature is changing...please make all contributions payable to "District 5 Correctional Facilities (Pink Can Funds)". Thanks.

In Service, David G.

Happy A.A. Anniversary

Central Group — Adam G.-2; Jen-6; Danny P- 7; Katie M.-4; Lilly A.-2; Shawn I.-2; Amanda S.-2; Joy-3; Bobby-15; Sonja-4; Doug B.-20; Jim K.-33; Archie-1; Bill- 21; Sean- 1

Lloyd New Hope— Mike F.-4; Bill H- 20

(I have not received any other anniversaries as of the deadline for The Message. Sorry) :(