



The Message

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

TRUSTED SERVANTS

INTERGROUP 5, INC MAY 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—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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Area Treasurer
Marilyn B.
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Through the Al-Anon Back Door

My name is Liz W. and I am an alcoholic. Like many in recovery, I was raised in an alcoholic family. My mother often reminded the 4 of us that we were all accidents and not part of her plan. She did, however, brag that we were all totally independent by age 2! Positive attention was received only thru outstanding performance. The picture I have of my childhood, is standing outside the closed door of my Mom's home office, yearning to talk to her, but remembering her standing orders not to bother her unless the house was on fire!

As a teen, I looked for love in relationships and ended up pregnant at 17. I now know that God blessed me with my daughter, because He knew that, although I did not care about what happened to me, I loved her so much that I would do the right things for her sake. From my parents' point of view, my pregnancy was just another way that I had let them down and proved that I was no good. Needless to say, 18 months later when I was raped by a fellow college student, I told NO ONE. My parents would've said that it was my fault and, as an unwed mother, society (at that time) would've persecuted me. It would have been like getting violated all over again.

All this served to reinforce the ardent people-pleaser that I had become. I had no boundaries and felt like I had to do whatever I could to please, so that people would like me. It was almost like I had to earn the right to be alive. Some people say that they were very low on their priority list. I wasn't even on mine! Being codependent had a very high price...at age 19, I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. My body was attacking itself. I wanted so desperately to be loved and cherished that I'd go from one dysfunctional relationship to the next. I bought the world's lie that sex was intimacy and truly believed that was all that I had to offer. I now know that it is only the world's cheap imitation for the real thing.

I was first introduced to the 12 steps late in 1991 when my alcoholic parent died. I loved my parent but felt guilty about the relief I felt that this person would never hurt me again. A counselor suggested that I attend Al-Anon to learn how to deal with some of my feelings. I learned a lot about alcoholism there. I learned that alcoholism is a family disease and that I had the "ism" long before I poured alcohol on it. Strangely enough, even though I had thoroughly hated alcohol...the taste...even the smell of it; at age 40 I crossed the line into the hopeless state of mind and body that defines alcoholism. I had, yet again, gotten into an unhealthy, destructive relationship that brought about my bottom. I met a man, was swept off my feet (how I love romance) and jumped feet first into another disastrous marriage. He turned out to be not only an alcoholic but a crack addict! It was a nightmare!

(cont on page 2)

EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE

Step Five

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Chapter 5 of Alcoholics Anonymous, provides the instructions for this step and is called "Into Action" not "Into Thinking." Now that we have discovered the "obstacles in our path" in the 4th step and know we have been the creator of all our troubles, we should be eager to discuss them with someone. We discover that our ego has created a wall between us and the "Sunlight of the Spirit" such that we have lived in the dark shadows of life, created by "selfish and self-centered" behavior and now we are about to step into the "light" and let the Sunlight of the Spirit begin to shine on us. The book says that "we usually find a solitary self-appraisal insufficient. Many of us thought it necessary to go much further." Hence the need to talk it over with another human. We did it. God knows it. So let us see how honest we have been in the 4th Step by discussing it with another human being. We get to embellish what we have written in the short form in the 4th step with a detailed discussion of where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened? It is also the opportunity to finally get our "secrets" out in the open. It has been my experience that holding back on this wonderful opportunity to get rid of secrets is the downfall of many well-intentioned alcoholics. How would you like to "look the world in the eye, be at perfect peace and ease, have your fears fall from you, begin to feel the nearness of our Creator, have certain spiritual beliefs, but now begin to have a spiritual experience?" These are the "results" of doing Step 5. The advice in the book as to who we do a 5th Step with was offered at a time when AA was in its infancy with very few members and very few meetings. The Twelve and Twelve suggests that we do the 5th Step with our Sponsors. It makes sense as they will probably be with us for the long haul. The book says after we decide who is to hear our story, we waste no time. Time elements in recovery are very important and all references to time in the book seem to indicate a need to "get r done." So the chapter title is "Into Action" and not into sitting around and thinking about it. This step takes courage!

John W.

Tradition Five

Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

It is amazing to me, even after a number of years of sobriety, how AA is able to work in so many different places and with so many different people. We are, as the book says, people who would not ordinarily mix. And yet we do. When I was new to AA I brought with me a number of personal prejudices—opinions that people today would be shocked to know I once held. Some people, I thought, were not "real" alcoholics. Other's problems were 'petty.' I questioned their motives for being in AA. I questioned their program. It is easy to see, in retrospect, that self-centeredness is one of my worst defects! I complained to my sponsor about some of my home group members. His reply was that I should shut up, shut my eyes, and listen to what they said. I was not to judge them on the basis of anything other than their words. I didn't care much for my sponsor, and so to prove him wrong I spent several weeks in meetings listening and trying to keep my eyes closed. And then one night, after a particularly bad day, someone in the back of the room said something that really shook me. It occurred to me that he had something—not just that I *wanted*—but that I *needed*. I turned to find that the speaker was one of 'those people' I had formerly hated. It is hard to hate someone when they have opened their heart to you, and held out their hand to pull you to safety. The Big Book describes AAs as being "like the passengers of a great liner the moment after rescue from shipwreck when camaraderie, joyousness and democracy pervade the vessel from steerage to Captain's table" (17). This might be true most of the time, but any member who has attended a contentious business meeting will tell you, it is not true 100% of the time! And there are so many different people and meetings and activities, and so many different ways of 'doing' AA, one might well ask, *How have AAs preserved unity and joy for the past 69 years?*

The answer is in Tradition Five: "*Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.*" Today when I encounter discord in AA, I return to this fundamental point: we are alcoholics, and our purpose is to help one another stay sober. I can meet any agitation by pausing and asking, *Will this activity advance our primary purpose? Do my words and actions carry the message of recovery or of my ego out-of-control?* Unity means *recognition of the goal*, not necessarily the means of achieving it. Am I insisting that others carry the message *my way*? Today I am grateful for the patience and tolerance others showed me while I learned to show love and tolerance to them.

Melvin S.

(cont from page 2)

Looking back there were a lot of red flags but I just pushed them down and had another drink. I was FINALLY emotionally and spiritually bankrupt. I did, however, know right where to go. A dear friend took me to my first AA meeting on March 25th, 1993. I remember introducing myself that day by saying, my name is Liz and I don't know what I am! Over the next 6 months I struggled with the total surrender required in Step 3. I wanted the "softer, easier way". I tried surrendering bits and pieces. I turned things over to God, just to snatch them back again.

Finally, on September 9th, 1993, I surrendered all. I WAS powerless and I COULD NOT manage my life. THAT was the turning point in my life. Once I willingly turned my life over to God, He proved Himself over and over again!!! By working the 12 steps, I was given tools to learn how to live life on life's terms. I learned that by taking personal responsibility for MY part in any situation, I could change MY attitudes and MY behaviors. I learned the keys of ACCEPTANCE and GRATITUDE which unlocked the door to serenity and peace in my life. Although it seems that I did everything I could ruin my life up, I now know that God was there the whole time, waiting patiently and protecting me.

Thank you for letting me share.

Intergroup 5 News

PRAYER FOR PROTECTION

By James Dillet Freeman

The Light of God surrounds me.
 The Love of God enfolds me.
 The Power of God protects me.
 The Presence of God watches over me.
 The Mind of God guides me.
 The Life of God flows through me.
 The Laws of God direct me.
 The Power of God abides within me.
 The Joy of God uplifts me.
 The Strength of God renews me.
 The Beauty of God inspires me.
 Wherever I am, God is!

A copy of this poem was carried to the moon by Apollo astronaut, "Buzz" Aldrin on the first manned moon landing.

RESILIENCE

By Joe Ann Vangelder

Resilience, what does that imply?
 Swirling chaos, pain, fear, anxiety,
 Yet, underneath all this
 Lies a core of certainty,
 A heart of quiet knowingness
 That all this "botheration"
 Is a passing phase,
 A learning,
 A growing experience out of which
 My central core of Strength will emerge triumphant
 Because it is there;
 Because I *am* resilient.

April 2008 Treasurer's report

General Fund
 Checking:
Beginning 3/31/08 balance \$1373.90

Contributions:

Appalachicola Bay	15.00
Bradfordville	100.00
Central	200.00
Faithful Fivers	10.00
Happy Hour	131.43
Men's Faith	438.65
Mustard Seed	62.22
Open Door	68.00
Sober Living	<u>25.00</u>
Total Contributions	<u>1050.30</u>

Less:
 Disbursements:

Answering service	216.00
Office Coord. Travel/Rel. Exp	147.62
Internet monthly charge	51.96
Printing Newsletter/ W&W	75.25
Rent	257.01
Telephone	<u>48.19</u>
Total Expense Disb.	<u>796.03</u>

Ending Balance 4/30/08 1628.17

Prudent Reserve Savings:

Beginning 3/31/08 balance	955.44
Interest earned	0.17
Transfer to General Fund	<u>0.00</u>
Ending Balance 4/30/08	<u>955.61</u>

Literature Fund

Beginning 3/31/08 Balance	<u>1,065.24</u>
Literature sales	1027.15
Sales Tax collected	<u>77.08</u>
Total Receipts	1104.23

Less: Literature Purchases 676.30

Total Expenditures 676.30

Ending Balance 4/30/08 \$1,493.17

HEARD AT A MEETING ...

- If you don't have the willingness, desperation will suffice
- If I could focus more on what I'm getting rather than what I'm losing, staying sober would be easier
- Drinking in anger at someone is like swallowing poison and waiting for the other person to die
- It doesn't matter how the jackass got in the ditch, what is important is how we are going to get him out
- Yesterday's a cancelled check; tomorrow's a promissory note. Today is a gift from God; that's why it's called the present

ARE YOU STILL WILLING TO GO TO ANY LENGTHS TO STAY SOBER? ARE YOU WILLING TO CARRY THE MESSAGE TO THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS?

Guys and Gals, please help us bring an A.A. meeting to NPI on Saturday evenings at 6:30 pm. Just show up and share your experience, strength and hope. Those who are not currently on probation or parole are welcome (DOC rules). This is a great opportunity for service work. The address is: 3190 Springhill Rd. For further information please contact:

Matt - (314) 602-6610, Autumn - (314) 602-6694 or Jimmy - (850) 224-1576

EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS

INTERGROUP 5 NEWS

Web statistics - 5,727 pages sent from the Intergroup 5 website - our 2nd highest month behind March 2008!!
Way to go web team!

The following 54 calls were answered by volunteers:

12 step - 1, Al-anon - 4, AA info - 7, Meeting info - 38, Misc - 4. The office coordinator also picked up about 15 messages - 9 of those were hang-ups. Thanks to everyone who has made and continues to make this most valuable contribution to local AA.

We need more volunteers - call Rob K at 545-3833.
We have plenty of slots for day or night.

While increasing your own chances of staying sober, you can get a multitude of things done while maintaining the AA hot-line. For example:

Top 10 things to do while answering phones at Intergroup:

10. study/do homework
9. listen to AA speakers on CD or internet
8. surf the web
7. reflect/regroup/meditate
6. journal/pray
5. read and learn more about the AA organization
4. read the AA books
3. be grateful to be alive and able to serve
2. last night's 10th step

and the #1 thing to do:

1. work with a sponsor/sponsee

Top 10 things NOT to do while answering the phones at Intergroup:

10. have band rehearsal
9. smoke anything
8. make personal calls on the hot-line phone
7. be rude to callers
6. preach to callers
5. sleep
4. hang up
3. 13th step anyone
2. advise callers on religion, medicine, relationships, or law

and the #1 thing NOT to do:

1. give out AA members' phone numbers to callers

comments or questions: e-mail:
office-coordinator@intergroup5.org

CURRENT EVENTS

SOUTHSIDE GROUP HAS MOVED!

Remember 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.

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. April Anniversary

Bradfordville Group: Nancy B. - 1, Ellen D. - 13, Kathy S. - 19
Central Group: Salar - 1, Catherine H. - 1, Jessica - 3, Erin T. - 5, Stephanie G. - 11, Jim C. - 16, Melvin S. - 18, John K. - 19, Mac M. - 20, Elizabeth - 20, Tim E. - 20
Living Sober, Happy Hour: Billy - 1, Jackie - 1, Will E. - 2, John F. - 3, Marion B. - 31
Home Group: Greg S. - 16

IMPORTANT MAY DATES IN A.A. HISTORY

May 1919 - Bill returns home from service.
May 1950 - Nell Wing became Bill W's secretary.
May 1951 - Al-Anon is founded by Lois W. and Anne B.
May 1, 1940 - Rollie H, Cleveland Indians, first anonymity break on national level.
May 6, 1946 - The long form of the "Twelve Traditions" was published in the AA Grapevine.
May 8, 1971 - Bill W buried in private ceremony, E. Dorset, VT
May 11, 1935 - Bill W made calls from the Mayflower Hotel and was referred to Dr. Bob.
May 11, 1939 - first group to officially call itself Alcoholics Anonymous met at Abby G's house in Cleveland. (some say the 18th)
May 12, 1935 @ 5 pm - Bill W met Doctor Bob at the home of Henrietta Seiberling.
May 15, 1961 - Bill W's mother, Dr Emily Strobell, died.
May 18, 1950 - Dr. Bob tells Bill "I reckon we ought to be buried like other folks" after hearing that local AA's want a huge memorial.
May 19, 2000 - Dr. Paul O., Big Book Story "Acceptance Was the Answer" died at the age of 83.
May 28, 1974 - The first World Service Meeting of AA outside North America was held in London.
May 29, 1980 - "Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers" was published.
Diz T.