



The Message

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

TRUSTED SERVANTS

INTERGROUP 5, INC NOVEMBER 2008 TALLAHASSEE, FL

InterGroup

*Chairman—Craig F—Living Sober
Co-chairman—Mike F—New Hope
Secretary—Carol H—New Hope
Treasurer—Matt C—Nite Owl
Literature—Vacant
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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District 5

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NFACAA—Area 14

*Area Treasurer
Marilyn B.
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I am an alcoholic. My name is Becky. There was very little drinking in my family when I was growing up. My parents would share a drink on rare occasions. That drinking pattern changed three years after my parents' divorce. My mother began drinking at age forty. I watched her drinking escalate and thought I would never be like her.

I began having a few drinks when I was in my early twenties and drank more when I moved away from home. It was not long before I was blacking out and could not remember what happened when I had been drinking. I started missing work frequently and was on the way to losing a really good job where I had worked for fifteen years. Several supervisors told me to do something about my drinking but I blamed them for not "understanding". My personal relationships suffered or failed due to my drinking. I was a daily drinker and drank alone at home during my last drinking years.

During the summer of 1986 I started feeling physically ill. I thought I had indigestion but nothing I did made it go away. On Friday, September 26, 1986 I called my youngest sister and asked her to help me. We went to the hospital emergency room after trying to get an appointment with my family doctor who could not see me. I was admitted to the hospital and spent eight days there. My diagnosis was acute pancreatitis. I did not realize how ill I was. I was on a liquid diet for three meals a day for five days. One of the doctors asked me how much I drank and I lied about the amount. He told me if I kept drinking like I had been I would be dead by the time I was forty. I was thirty-three years old. My family doctor came to see me every day and told me I could never drink again. Nothing made an impact on me during the first few days. Later that week I started to feel my doctor cared about me and I decided to do what he said. My doctor sent someone from a treatment program to see me. She told me about inpatient treatment, intensive outpatient and counseling. Being the alcoholic I am, I chose the "easy" one - counseling. The counselor I saw told me I needed to go to Alcoholics Anonymous. I did not understand because I was not drinking. I started attending AA meetings and bought a Big Book. I did not understand anything in the beginning but I kept listening and paying attention when people shared. I learned that not drinking was a small part of what I needed to do. My life really began to change after I worked the steps. The resentments I had with my mother were no longer important. My mother was diagnosed with cancer in 1996 and died in 1998. Because of getting rid of the resentments I had with her, I was able to be present and help her when she was sick. This is one of the greatest gifts I have received in sobriety.

I now know that stopping drinking and living the AA way of life are some of the best things that have happened to me. I found some real friends and hope in AA. I have a close connection with a Higher Power who guides me in everything I do. I recently celebrated twenty-two years of sobriety. I look forward to many more days on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.

Thanks for letting me share. **Love, Becky C.**

Experience, Strength and Hope

Step Eleven

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out.

Unpacking the meaning of Step 11, we might note with curiosity that it suggests we actively seek knowledge and power.

Wasn't the self pursuit of knowledge and power what brought on most of our troubles? Didn't we think that power could protect us, ensuring that we got what we wanted, and if we were smarter than the next person we could escape the pain and suffering visited upon the rest of humanity?

Developing knowledge and power to satisfy the self or the ego is precisely what we abandon with this step. Having thoroughly worked the first 10 steps it is clear to us that Step 11 is suggesting we now deepen the commitment we made in Step 3, developing practices that will sustain our search for the right way to live.

Step 11 tells us precisely how to do this. We are to make an active search, a sustained effort, of consciousness developed through prayer and meditation. Prayer and meditation are practices we can engage in once in a while, once each day, once each hour or minute by minute.

It is up to us how much prayer and meditation we need to develop the awareness necessary to live life on life's terms and not by the dictates of the always thirsting ego with its endless grasping at self satisfaction. So much effort is needed? (This may be a little like asking how much breath we need to live.)

If we're at home in the Christian, Muslim, or Hindu traditions, or with the notion of a higher power of our own understanding, wonderful! We begin to strive to improve our minds (conscious contact) and the will (power) into accord with reality as it is. If we are atheist, agnostic or Buddhist--also wonderful! The form of our effort might be different but the aim's the same. Experience has shown that all of us--no matter what our spiritual practice may or may not be-- can do this step.

What form might our prayers take? The Serenity Prayer, the Step 3 prayer for relief from the bondage of self, "Not my will, but Thy will be done," are obvious models. In "12 Steps and 12 Traditions" Bill Wilson defines prayer as a form of petition, a request made of God to meet our needs and the needs of others.

What form might our meditation take? There is not much about the actual practice of meditation in the BB. Bill helpfully suggests that those who are familiar with prayer but have no experience with meditation begin by using "a really good prayer." He recommends the beautiful and moving St. Francis Prayer. He also acknowledges that the experience of mediation is vaster than this practice. "The actual experience of meditation and prayer across the centuries is, of course, immense," he writes. "The world's libraries and places of worship are a treasure trove for all seekers. It is to be hoped that every A.A. who has a religious connection which emphasizes meditation will return to the practice of that devotion as never before."

There are wonderful contemplative traditions within Western religions (both Christianity and Judaism), but it's not clear what Bill had in mind when he wrote about "a religious connection which emphasizes meditation." Probably he did not mean Buddhism or other nonwestern traditions.

Today, books and classes on how to meditate are everywhere in our culture and Bill, a true spiritual seeker, would no doubt himself be suggesting these techniques so long as they strengthen one's sobriety and the ability to live in accord with a reality greater than one's self.

(cont. on back page)

Tradition Eleven

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.

Just as the TWELVE STEPS are a suggested program to maintain my sobriety; I believe the TWELVE TRADITIONS are guides for maintaining the program. The test of time has proven them to be proper. I must admit that I wish the whole world could experience the state of wellbeing I feel after a really good meeting; but, TRADITION ELEVEN tells me I shouldn't go shout it out on a mountain. We are reminded that the general public is still uneducated regarding the alcoholic's illness. The name ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS has anonymity as a key factor. The alcoholic out there who still suffers may rely on this. During the recovery process, we deal with issues that can be painfully private. The assurance that this process is safely removed from the uneducated public's scrutiny is essential. If we have to deal with the public, we can not violate this trust in any for of mass communication.

There are sectors of the public that do have an understanding of the alcoholic illness, such as the medical, legal, and clerical communities. They have observed over time the success that is possible with the AA program. The half dozen or so analysts I have visited have all pointed to AA as the best means to stay sober. Success speaks for itself.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS has built-in advocates. The membership itself, by being an example of a way of life that holds promise, can and does attract those who need us. I need only to work the PROGRAM and humbly maintain my sobriety. That way, I can "shout it out on a mountain" louder and clearer than mere words could ever allow.

Mike F. Reprinted from the November, 2007 Message.

The program Alcoholics Anonymous saved my life, **NOT** Recovery Anonymous or what's better defined these days as "Almost Anything"!!

There IS a difference between addicts and alcoholics. Alcohol is a drug but it's NOT a narcotic. We aren't addicted to alcohol. It's an illness, a spiritual malady and an obsession of the mind. We don't "use" alcohol, unless we cook with it or put it on a wound. (ouch) There is no need to say "addict" for identification purposes. Anything after "but" is BS and anything after "I'm an alcoholic" is meaningless and secondary in a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Most people in AA are unable to moderate a lot of things in their life. That's just how we roll. Why then don't we hear I'm an alcoholic, gambler, addict (addicted to *what* by the way), over-eater, nicotine-aholic, sexaholic, sports-junkie, workaholic blah, blah, blah.

This is not the me, my or I program. It's the **THE** program. Studying pages 84-103 is where it's at and taking that to the next real alcoholics.

We have concluded to publish an anonymous volume setting forth the problem as we see it. We shall bring to the task our combined experience and knowledge. This should suggest a useful program for anyone concerned with a drinking problem.

Pg.19 Alcoholics Anonymous

Heather C.

Intergroup 5 News

Intergroup 5 Meeting Minutes Date: Oct. 1, 2008

Groups Represented: Central, Downtown, Happy Hour, Home, Lake Jackson, Living Sober, Lloyd New Hope, Mustard Seed, Nite Owl & Open Door. Eight IG5 representatives were present. 14 people attended.

Secretary's Report: Approved and accepted.

Treasurer's Report: Approved and accepted.

Office Report: Volunteers are still needed! Please call the office. The report is reflected in *The Message*. The new **Where and When** for Fall-2008 has been printed & distributed. It can be downloaded from the web site. The number of calls has decreased. Please send meeting updates to Rob K., the Office Coordinator.

Literature Report: Books and pamphlets are available for sale to all groups. \$3000.00 of inventory was sold this past month.

Activities Report: Laura is lining up a speaker for the Holiday Dinner on Dec. 13th. Groups are volunteering to provide meats (entrees) for the dinner. Anyone willing to bring side dishes are encouraged to do so. Desserts will be graciously accepted.

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. to the Web Master, Debbie C. If anyone is interested in adding a page to the site, please contact her.

District Report: No report available. Area Assembly will be held on Oct. 3, 4 and 5 in Gainesville.

12 Step News: Jeff D. will be revising the 12 Step Volunteers list. Please contact him if you are interested in being on the list.

Old Business: 1. Holiday Dinner preparations are underway. If you would like to help (great service opportunity!!!!) please contact Laura A. 2. Rob K. presented the possible plan for our new answering, forwarding, etc. service. It was well received. 3. Jeff D. will make a presentation available for explaining the new plan.

New Business: None

Election of officers for Intergroup 5: Craig F. - Chair, Mike F. - Vice Chair, Christy T. - Secretary, Carol H. - Treasurer. The officers will assume their 2 year commitments in January 2009. There are still two appointed positions to be filled: Activities and Literature Chairpersons. **Submitted in Grateful Service, Carol**

October 2008 Treasurer's report

General Fund

Checking:
Beginning Balance 9/30/08 **\$1,456.67**

Contributions:

Apalachicola Bay Serenity	15.00	
Came to Believe		123.79
Central	200.00	
District Five		240.00
Monticello Serenity		25.00
Mustard Seed		41.29
Total Contributions		645.08

Less:

Disbursements:

Answering service		219.00
Office Coordinator Travel/Rel. Exp		147.62
Internet monthly charge		56.96
Printing Newsletter/ W&W		141.75
Rent		257.01
Telephone		48.41

Total Expense Disbursements:

870.75

Ending Balance 10/31/08

1,231.00

Prudent Reserve Savings:

Beginning 9/30/08 balance		955.87
Interest earned		0.00

Ending Balance 10/31/08

955.87

Literature Fund

Beginning 9/30/08 Balance		1,727.93
Literature sales		306.00
Sales Tax collected		23.02
Total Receipts		329.02

Less: Literature Purchases		0.00
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Total Expenditures

0.00

Ending Balance 10/31/08

\$2,056.95

Thanks for the opportunity to serve, Matt C.

Corrections Corner - November 08

David G., District 5 CFC chair

Here are the established corrections meetings in District 5 that I am aware of. If *YOU* are currently bringing a meeting into a correctional facility and I don't have it listed below, please contact me at corrections@intergroup5.org. Most of these meetings have only one outside AA member attending...

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Franklin CI (male) - ?pm Liberty CI (male) - 7pm	Tallahassee WRC (male) - 7:30pm Quincy Annex (male) - 7pm	Tallahassee FCI (female)?pm Gadsden CF (female)- ?pm Leon Co. Jail (male) - ?pm	Jefferson CI (male) - 6:30pm
Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
Leon Co. Jail (female) - ?pm		Wakulla CI (male) - 8:30am	

Here is a list of remaining correctional facilities in District 5 (by county). If you live near one of these facilities and are interested in carrying the message by bringing a meeting, literature, correspondence, etc., contact me at corrections@intergroup5.org.

Franklin	Gadsden	Jefferson	Leon
Franklin Co. Jail	River Junction Work Camp Gadsden Co. Jail	Jefferson Co. Jail Monticello New Life	SHISA - West Tallahassee Road Prison
Liberty	Madison	Taylor	Wakulla
Liberty WC Liberty Co. Jail (?)	Madison CI & WC Madison Co. Jail	Taylor CI & WC Taylor Co. Jail	Wakulla Co. Jail

EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS

INTERGROUP 5 NEWS

Web stats: 4,901 pages were sent from Intergroup 5's website: <http://www.intergroup5.org>
Phone Stats: The phone volunteers at the Intergroup 5 office answered 57 hot line calls of the following types: 12 step - 1, AI-Anon - 0, AA info - 10, Misc. - 2, Agency info - 1 and Meeting schedule/location information - 43
 To volunteer call the Intergroup 5 office 850.224.1818 or email: office-coordinator@intergroup5.org **Rob K.**

CURRENT EVENTS

Holiday Dinner: December 13, 2008
 Jackson Masonic Lodge, Apalachee Parkway
 Tallahassee, FL
District 5 Business Meeting: November 19, 2008 @ 7:00 pm
 Faith Presbyterian Church
Area Assembly: October 3, 4 & 5, 2008
 Paramount Resort & Conference Center, 2900 SW 13th St.
 Gainesville, FL 32608. (352) 377- 4000 or 877-992-9229

WANTED: LITERATURE COORDINATOR

We still have a need for a literature coordinator.
 Requirements: 2 years sobriety
 Benefits/Rewards: Service involvement helps keep you sober and helps other alcoholics.

***WANTED: AA MEMBERS**

<p>Big Book Study/Step Study Monday, 8:00 p.m. Townsend Recovery Center 2260 Wednesday Road</p>	<p>Open Big Book/12 & 12 Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. Westside Group Bethel Methodist Church Fellowship Hall</p>
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Happy A.A. October Anniversary

Bradfordville: Jama M. - 22, Robbie M. - 23
Capital City: Betty T. - 26
Central: Kristy - 1, Lucile - 2, Johnny - 3, Mike R. - 4, Kristen B. - 7, Greg - 21, Henry 28
Living Sober, Happy Hour & Conscious Contact: Debby C. - 1, Karen D. - 4, Mark H. - 4, Cheryl S. - 7, April C. - 9, Diane H. - 18, Hillary - 23, Jimmy C. - 25, James - 27
Lloyd New Hope: Tom H. - 5, Guenter - 9, Kris D. - 19
Monticello Serenity: Tom H. - 2, Lonnie J. - 3
Mustard Seed: Ann - 1, Bobby C. - 6, Don W. - 34

(cont. from page 2)

STEP ELEVEN

The point is to see reality as it is, without adding the colorations of one's preferences and prejudices, views and opinions, awakening to the insubstantiality of the self and the deluded, self-grasping, self-protecting mental habit patterns that make up the ego.

To get a sense of what meditation tastes like and its power to free us from addictive states of mind and behavior, simply sit still for 15 minutes and do nothing but observe your breath as mindfully as you can. Let go of judgments, thinking about tomorrow or the past. Just follow the breath and observe your mind and body.

Now, to get an idea of what you've just done, and to explore the practice further within *the context of AA recovery*, you might want to attend one or two of the 7:15 a.m. (9 a.m. Saturdays and Sundays) meditation meetings at CASA.

Meditation and prayer are essential to recovery. They liberate us from the confining, claustrophobic world of self.

Through wholly giving ourselves practices we at last realize the deep personality changes sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism - which is the definition of "spiritual experience," according to the Big Book (Appendix II).

Once we have gone through these deep personality changes and begin to gain real freedom from the addiction to the self there is nothing left to do, really -- only help others find freedom, serenity, and happiness. Only that.

John W.

IMPORTANT NOVEMBER DATES IN AA HISTORY

Nov 1934 - Ebby T. carries message to Bill.
 Nov 1936 - Fitz M leaves Towns Hospital to become 'AA #3'.
 Nov 1937 - 40 cases staying sober in Akron. Meeting of the Akron Group to consider Bill's ideas for how to expand the movement ... a book, AA hospitals, paid missionaries. Book passed by a majority of 2.
 Nov/Dec 1939 - Akron group withdraws from association with Oxford Group. Meetings moved from T Henry & Clarence Williams to Dr Bob and other members' homes.
 Nov 1941 - "First Mass AA Meeting" in Oklahoma City, 8 present, 1 was drunk.
 Nov 1945 - Bill published 'Those Goof Balls' in Grapevine.
 Nov 1986 - Big Book published in paperback.
 Nov 1, 1963 - Reverend Sam Shoemaker dies.
 Nov 3, 2001 - J P Miller who wrote screenplay for "The Days of Wine and Roses" died.
 Nov 9, 1966 - President Johnson appoints Marty M to the 1st National Advisory Committee on Alcoholism.
 Nov 10, 2001 - 1st of 400,000 4th Edition BBs arrives in the mail.
 Nov 11, 1934 - Armistice Day; Bill started drinking after dry spell, beginning of Bill's last drunk.
 Nov 14, 1940 - Alcoholic Foundation publishes 1st AA Bulletin.
 Nov 15, 1949 - Bill W suggests that groups devote Thanksgiving week to discussions of the 12 Traditions.
 Nov 16, 1950 - Dr. Bob died.
 Nov 21, 1952 - Willard Richardson, past Treasurer/Chairman of Alcoholic Foundation, dies.
 Nov 26, 1895 - Bill W born in East Dorsett, VT.
 Nov 26, 1939 - Dilworth Lupton gave sermon "Mr. X and Alcoholics Anonymous". Became 1 of first pamphlets on AA.
 Nov 28, 1943 - Bill guest speaker San Quentin Penitentiary.

Diz T.