



The Message

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

TRUSTED SERVANTS

INTERGROUP 5, INC DECEMBER 2009 TALLAHASSEE, FL

Intergroup

*Chairman—Craig F.—Living Sober
Vice Chairman—Mike F.—New Hope
Secretary—Christy T.—Happy Hour
Treasurer—Carol H.—New Hope
Literature Coordinator—Pete S.
Website—Debbie C.—Open Door
Activities—Tracy G.—Happy Hour
Office Coordinator—Pete S.
Membership—Vacant
Newsletter—Sandy M & Emily B -Mustard
Seed
12 Step--Jeff D--Central*

District 5

*DCM—Holly H.—Bradfordville
Alt. DCM—Donna W.—Happy Hour
Secretary—Matt N.—Central
Treasurer—Tracy I.—Bradfordville*

Standing Committees

*Public Info—Julia K.—Living Sober
CPC—Bradfordville Group
Treatment/BTG—Kris C.—Central
Corrections—David G—Happy Hour
Grapevine—Michael L.—Happy Hour
Accessibilities—Vacant
Archives—Vacant*

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I was 17 when I first drank alcohol and felt its effects. It was a magical feeling. A weight had been lifted from me. I felt loose and happy. I could laugh and not force the laughter over pain. I felt a sense of love for people that I had never felt. I could hug family members who I had animosities toward. My fears were gone and living was wonderful. I was connected and it felt good to be connected. Being high was great. I wanted to drink and be happy all the time.

Not long after completing college, around age 25, I became deeply concerned with the frequency and amount of my alcohol consumption. Without any sound reasoning, I incorrectly deduced, that my almost daily and usually heavy consumption of alcohol was the by-product of good mind control coupled with the gift of a high tolerance for alcohol. The hand writing was already on the wall and I could not read the hand writing with the eyes and mind of a drunk. During the next 4 and 1/2 years, I lost 2 good jobs, an apartment, got a DUI, and had a car repossessed. These occurrences, I suppose, are excellent examples of a lack of good mind control and high tolerance.

Shortly after turning 30, I drank around the clock for the first time and could not stop. I would drink until I passed out. I also went to treatment for the first time. I was told in treatment that once a drinker crosses over an imaginary line into alcoholism there is no turning back and that alcoholism was a progressive and fatal condition. The counselor went on to say that an alcoholic is more likely die an alcoholic death than not. The counselor also said because of my age and because alcohol had not done any damage to me physically at that point, it would be difficult for me to honestly grasp what he had told me about alcoholism and stop drinking. He was right, young and no damage was all I heard and that to me meant I could continue to drink.

I spent more than 20 years trying to control my drinking. I desperately wanted to be able to drink and get the ease and repose I got while alcohol still worked for me. I tried various methods to control my drinking, all to no avail. I managed to have extended periods of absenteeism from drinking, months and even years at a time. All the same, I always returned to drinking.

Even taking into account the measurable devastations and losses caused by my drinking, the absolute worst was the mounting destruction and deterioration to me as a person. A part of my soul seemed to leave with each binge. As the decline into chronic alcoholism continued, the visits to treatment centers near the end had gotten closer, just weeks between a need for professional medical and behavior assistance. Death loomed in the shadows; the level of the consequences near the end of my drinking was extremely high,

In October 2005 I came into the rooms of AA. I was totally convinced that I was powerless over alcohol and I was not in denial about the consequences of continued drinking. All the same, I had braced myself to ride it out to the bitter end. I felt hopeless because I felt I could not stop drinking. Conversely, in the rooms of Alcoholic Anonymous I was shown the path to relieve the obsession to drink one day at a time, I was shown the path to stop the erosion of my soul, and most importantly the path to connect with God who gives me the strength and serenity I need to make continued sobriety possible. All that is required of me is to work the steps and take the actions suggested to me in Alcoholic Anonymous.

JOHNNY F.



Experience, Strength and Hope



Step Twelve

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Viewing all the steps from the twelfth, it appears to be a pointer, forward to a plan of action that leads us into a way to live full lives with meaningful sobriety, lived with some soundness of mind. When we have reached step nine, before we are halfway through, we have begun to take the full responsibility of our past acts, and take responsibility for the well-being of others. We will be useable to others not because we are qualified as ex-drunks, but because we are qualified for usefulness because we were willing to take certain steps.

I will break the 12th step into its three clauses. Come, walk with me...

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, ...When I was newly sober, I hoped that coming to believe in a power greater than me, and turning my will and life over to this power, would give me all the spiritual awaking I would need. Then I could hit the eighth step with 'I'm sorrys' and I then carry the message. My fast track plan for sobriety left me with a hundred forms of unlooked at fears, self delusions, self pity, and self-centeredness. The world was still wrong, and drinking would provide no lasting relief from my discomfort.

I had to do the steps as laid out as best I could in the light of my own circumstances. I received gifts, often unseen until a step was completed. I took solace in the gifts promised in the ninth step when only half way through. I offer the gifts I received from doing the steps in short forms:

4-Clear thinking and honest appraisal about my life

5-Emergence from terrible isolation by sharing my burden of guilt

6-Abandon the limited objective of perfection and learned gratitude

7-Found peace of mind from asking for help with what brings me up short from being happy

8-Began the ending of my isolation from God, myself, and others

9-I took responsibility for well-being of others

10-I had moments of mental balance

11-I had moments of emotional balance

12-I had moments of spiritual balance and became willing to help others.

The actions I took, even though not perfectly done, created my spiritual awakening and allowed me to live life without drinking, and prepared me for the second part of step 12.

...we tried to carry this message to alcoholics,We can read in the 12&12 that sponsors can be useful because they carry the AA's tested experience with Step 4...and likewise similar tested experience with the rest of the steps.

I must engage with people to do this work. At meetings, I can shake hands, trade names, even multiple times until I remember them...all subtle ways to keep myself from isolating from others. When others share, I can try to give them my full attention. I listen closely. Maybe I can offer them a way to find some relief for a problem. I ask if they have a sponsor. I can ask what step they are working on. If they are stuck in a mud puddle I have been stuck in, I can offer what was suggested to me, and let them know what happened. I can offer my number and let them know to call me before they drink, not to deprive them of their choices and stop them, but to let them know I care about their life choices.

Working with other alcoholics keeps me immersed in the doing of the steps on a continuing basis in my own life, part of what will stand to ensure my continued sobriety.

...and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

This part of Step 12 seems to be the least grand of the three clauses. Yet the scope of this part of the step is the broadest. It extends the use of the principles of the twelve steps in all parts of my life, all interactions with others, to wherever I find myself, even to the solitary business within the boundaries of my own little head, when no one is watching and listening. Before doing the steps on my own life, I could not even imagine the value I would find them to have. Continuing to do them and share the doing with others serves to ensure my sobriety and soundness of mind, makes me useful to others, and provides a sustaining and meaningful substitute for the old imperfect spiritual longing for isolation and oblivion that drinking seemed to bring. The worst of me has become useful in saving the lives of others.

In closing, I am reminded of my friend who shared with me, it is not my time in sobriety that is important, but the amount of sobriety in my time. Practicing the twelfth step after I learned how to do the preceding steps from others before me, gives me a life with clear connections to God, myself, and others, and allows me to have sobriety in my time.

JIM



Intergroup 5 News



INTERGROUP 5 MEETING MINUTES NOVEMBER

Groups Represented: Happy Hour, Lloyd New Hope, Lake Jackson, Central, Woodville, Open Door, Mustard Seed, Living Sober and the Home Group. 15 people attended; 7 IG representatives were present.

Secretary's Report: Approved and accepted.

Treasurer's Report: Rep absent; Line 1 Communications & Net Tallahassee show zero on balance sheet because she has not received the bills yet to pay them.

Office Report: Office cleaned up and organized and the phone system is doing well.

Literature Report: Will get with Matt C. to see if there's a template for the Literature fund and will start back with a monthly report. Books have been received since last order.

Activities Report: Tracy wants each group to donate a monetary gift or food (or both) for the holiday party. If you can please bring the check to the next Intergroup meeting. Also, remind folks that this is a potluck dinner and to bring a dish to share.

* **Need volunteers to help set up/clean up** please contact tracytulip@gmail.com if interested.

Web Committee Report: Someone suggested to Debbie that the Treasurer's report should be on the website; motion made and approved. We will go back and make copies of the reports that have not been included in *The Message* since January.

District Report: Will ask at the next District meeting if they would like information posted on the Intergroup 5 website. If so, what information...of course related to AA.

12 Step News: Rep Absent. Craig clarified how the phone system should work and the responsibilities of the answering service volunteers vs. the 12-Step volunteers. We need an updated 12-Step list and it was suggested that we start calling the people on the list to make sure the numbers are correct and make sure they are still interested in being on the list. We will start promoting the new list to get more volunteers.

New Business:

1) New nominations for positions are as follows: Chair- Debra N., Vice-Chair- Christy T. *** If interested in either position please come to the next Intergroup meeting on Dec. 2nd***

Newly elected positions are: Treasurer- James R., Secretary- David G. **Congratulations guys!**

2) Mike F. got a Brevard area service pamphlet and we will follow the content and make one for our service area.

See you at the Holiday Dinner, Christy T.

Twelve Tips on Keeping Your Holiday Season Sober/Clean and Joyous

1. Line up extra AA/NA activities for the holiday season. Arrange to take newcomers to meetings, answer the phones at a clubhouse or central office, or help line, speak, help with dishes, or visit the detox ward at a hospital.
2. Be host to AA/NA friends, especially newcomers. If you don't have a place where you can throw a formal party, take one person to a diner and spring for the coffee.
3. Keep your AA/NA telephone list with you all the time. If a using/drinking urge or panic comes, postpone everything else until you've called an AA/NA
4. Find out about the special holiday parties, meetings, or other celebrations given by groups in your area, and go. If you're timid, take someone with you.
5. Skip any drinking/using occasion you are nervous about. Remember how clever you were at excuses when using/drinking? Now put the talent to good use. No office party is as important as saving your life.
6. If you have to go to a using/drinking party and can't take an AA/NA with you, keep some candy handy.
7. Don't think you have to stay late. Plan in advance an "important date" you have to keep.
8. Worship in your own way.
9. Don't sit around brooding. Catch up on those books, museums, walks, and letters.
10. Don't start now getting worked up about all those holiday temptations. Remember, "One Day at a Time" and "Just for Today".
11. Enjoy the true beauty of holiday love and joy. Maybe you cannot give material gifts this year, but you can give love.
12. "Having had a" No need to spell out the Twelfth Step here, since you already know it.

Happy A.A. November Anniversary

Central : D. K.-1, Darren-1, Dave-1, Jim C.-1, Patrick S.-1, Lauren - 2, Mark H.-2, May-2, Cynthia S.-3, Karen-4, Lynn-4, Charlie-14, Joanne W.-16, Bob-28, Robert-30

Mustard Seed: Tammy-9

Singleness of Purpose: Charlie H.-14, Don K.-15, Harry S.-15, Mike L.-25





EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS



INTERGROUP 5 NEWS

Web stats: 3,909 pages were sent from the Intergroup 5 website. The following calls were answered by volunteers:

| | |
|--------------|----|
| 12 Step | 5 |
| Al-Anon | 3 |
| AA info | 35 |
| Meeting Info | 51 |
| Agency info | 1 |

SIGNIFICANT DECEMBER DATES IN A.A. HISTORY

Dec 1934 - Bill & Lois start attending Oxford Group meetings.

Dec 1934 to May 1935 - Bill works with alcoholics, but fails to sober any of them. Lois reminds him HE is sober.

Dec 1938 - Twelve Steps written.

Dec 1939 - First AA group in mental institution, Rockland State Hospital, NY.

Dec 1939 - Matt Talbot Club has 88 members, uses wagons to collect old furniture to recondition & sell, not A.A., used A.A. program, material, marked 1st effort reach alcoholics outside married middle-class category.

Dec 1948 - Dr. Bob's last major talk, in Detroit.

Dec 1950 - Grapevine article signed by both Bill and Dr Bob recommend establishing AA General Service Conference.

Dec 1955 - 'Man on the Bed' painting by Robert M. first appeared in Grapevine. Painting originally called 'Came to Believe'

Dec 1982 - Nell W. retires from GSO after 35 years of service.

Dec 1, 1940 - Chicago Daily Tribune begins a series of articles on AA by Nall Hamilton.

Dec 5, 1985 - Dave B, founder of Montreal Group dies weeks before 50th anniversary. His story added to the 4th Edition BB.

Dec 6, 1939 - Bert the Tailor lends Works Publishing \$1000.

Dec 6, 1979 - Akron Beacon reports death of Henrietta Sieberling.

Dec 7, 1949 - Sister Ignatia received Poverello Medal on behalf of A.A.

Dec 10, 1975 - Birds of a Feather AA group for pilots is formed.

Dec 11, 1934 - Bill admitted to Towns Hosp 4th/last time (fall '33, '34 in summer, midsummer and final admittance).

Dec 11, 1941 - Dallas Morning News reports 1st AA group formed in Dallas.

Dec 12, 1934 - Bill has Spiritual Experience at Towns Hospital.

Dec 12, 1937 - Bill meets with Rockefeller Foundation and tries to get money.

Dec 13, 1937 - Rockland State Mental Hospital takes patients to meeting in New Jersey.

Dec 13 or 14, 1934 - Ebby visited Bill at hospital, brought William James's book, "Varieties of Religious Experience".

Dec 20, 1945 - Rowland H dies (he carried the Oxford Group message to Ebby).

Dec 27, 1893 - Rev Samuel Shoemaker is born.

DIZ T.

CONFERENCES AND OTHER EVENTS

Holiday Dinner

December 12, 2009
Jackson Masonic Lodge
Tallahassee, FL

46th Women's International Conference

February 11-14, 2010
Doubletree Hotel
5780 Major Boulevard
Orlando, FL 32819

2010 Flint River Roundup

March 12-14, 2010
Albany, GA

A. A. International Convention

July 1-4, 2010
San Antonio, TX

54th Florida State Conference

August 11-14, 2010
Doral Golf Resort & Spa
Miami, FL

Tradition Twelve

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all out Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

1947 April 8 - After a difficult year of talks on policy and structure, Bill W. wrote a paper titled "Our AA General Service Center-The Alcoholic Foundation of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow." It outlined a history of the Foundation and recommended a General Service Conference and renaming the Alcoholic Foundation to the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Trustees' reaction was at first defensive and then outright negative. They saw no need for change. Most members would not associate the seeds of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts with the years 1946 and 1947 respectively. AA was on the verge of its teenage years and a visionary Bill W was laying the groundwork for the membership's coming of age. Our groups needed leadership.

In Bill's writing of the Traditions, he followed the same path as when he wrote the Steps. Tradition One explained the problem, Tradition Two explained the solution, and if you follow the next nine traditions, you will receive the spiritual foundation of anonymity in Tradition Twelve.

Protecting other members' anonymity is very important to the growth of the fellowship; however, in meetings there is no anonymity.

We learned long ago in history that personalities can ruin any fellowship aka the Washingtonians who had a big start in recovery from alcoholism. Again Bill was a visionary in asking us to practice principles, allowing us to be more humble in our fellowship.

DIZ T.