



The Message

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

TRUSTED SERVANTS

INTERGROUP 5, INC FEBRUARY 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—*Rock A.—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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Charming Is the Word for Alcoholics

DOWN AT THE BOTTOM OF THE social scale of AA society are the pariahs, the untouchables, and the outcasts, all under-privileged and all known by one excoriating epithet - relatives.

I am a relative. I know my place. I am not complaining. But I hope no one will mind if I venture the plaintive confession that there are times, oh, many times when I wish I had been an alcohol-ic. By that I mean that I wish I were an AA. The reason is that I consider the AA people the most charming in the world.

Such is my considered opinion. As a journalist, I have found it my fortune to meet many of the people who are considered charming. I number among my friends stars and lesser lights of stage and cinema; writers are my daily diet; I know the ladies and gentlemen of both political parties; I have been entertained in the White House; I have broken bread with kings and ministers and ambassadors; and I say, after that catalog, that I would prefer an evening with my AA friends to an evening with any person or group of persons I have indicated.

I asked myself why I consider so charming these alcoholic caterpillars who have found their butterfly wings in Alcoholics Anonymous. There are more reasons than one, but I can name a few.

The AA people are what they are, and they were what they were, because they are sensitive, imaginative, possessed of a sense of humor and an awareness of universal truth.

They are sensitive, which means that they are hurt easily, and that helped them become alcoholics. But when they have found their restoration, they are still as sensitive as ever - responsive to beauty and to truth and eager about the intangible glories of life. That makes them charming companions.

They are imaginative, and that helped to make them alcohol-ics. Some of them drank to flog their imagination on to greater ef-forts. Others guzzled only to black out unendurable visions that rose in their imaginations. But when they have found their restor-ation, their imagination is responsive to new incantations, and their talk abounds with color and light, and that makes them charming companions, too.

They are possessed of a sense of humor. Even in their cups, they have been known to say damnably funny things. Often, it was being forced to take seriously the little and mean things of life that made them seek escape in a bottle. But when they have found their restoration, their sense of humor finds a blessed freedom and they are able to reach a godlike state where they can laugh at themselves - the very height of self-conquest. Go to the meetings and listen to the laughter. At what are they laughing? At ghoulish memories over which weaker souls would cringe in useless remorse. And that makes them wonderful people to be with by candlelight.

And they are possessed of a sense of universal truth. That is often a new thing in their hearts. The fact that this at-oneness with God's universe had never been awakened in them is sometimes the reason they drank. The fact that it was at last awakened is almost always the reason that they were restored to the good and simple ways of life. Stand with them when the meeting is over and listen as they say the Lord's Prayer!

They have found a Power greater than themselves which they diligently serve. And that gives a charm that never was elsewhere on land and sea; it makes you know that God himself is really charming, because the AA people reflect his mercy and his forgiveness

by Fulton Oursler (1944)

Experience, Strength and Hope

Step Two

Appropriately, Step Two provides the recovering alcoholic with two distinct challenges. The first is that of defining sanity or its absence: were we in fact insane? The other is the necessity of reliance on "a power greater than ourselves" to be restored to sanity if that – in fact – is necessary.

Considering the first issue, while many active alcoholics are psychiatrically diagnosable, (Borderline Personality Disorder being probably the most usual), many are not. We require a definition of insanity – however unpleasant – that almost all of us can accept.

Try this one: any persons who treat themselves as destructively as active alcoholics consistently do cannot be sane. (and/or) Any persons who treat others whom they say they love as badly as alcoholics routinely do cannot be sane. Of course as is true regarding any pathology, there are degrees of severity ranging from mild to severe, but most of us can accept this understanding of insanity. We're also in agreement that we cannot continue to live in this way if we want to develop sustainable sobriety.

So why does the Step insist that we'll require the intervention of an outside entity – a power greater than ourselves – to develop sane relationships with ourselves and others? Why won't that happen more or less automatically when we stop corrupting ourselves with alcohol? Gregory Bateson gives us the answer in his first principle of Cybernetics (the science of intelligence). It states, intelligently enough, "No system can understand itself." There we have it. We must reach beyond ourselves in order to truly see ourselves, to begin to outgrow ego.

.. Tradition Two

I believe that Bill W. could foresee the future problems that lay ahead and he recognized the fact that AA would need direction or guidelines to keep us united or we would fail ourselves and all the ones to come. From the information he had gained from the letters written in to the central office and the failing of the Washingtonians, he began to write the tradition steps.

Through the Grapevine that Bill W. was using to correspond with the different groups, he began to print the traditions. The first tradition was the problem, the second tradition was the solution, and the other ten traditions were how to find and maintain the solution. The first writing and printing was called the "long form." The long form for the second tradition reads: *For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.* The short form that is usually read by groups today reads: *For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.*

Tradition Two is the only tradition that the short form is longer than the long form. Why this came about, I really don't know.

The short form of Tradition Two was brought about one day in 1947 by a man named Earl T. who started AA in Chicago. He visited Bill W. and had an idea they could parallel the traditions with the two hundred words in the twelve recovery steps and from this visit came the short form of the twelve traditions. Some groups in AA read the long form of the traditions once a month. From the pamphlet "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated."

Then who is in charge here? AA is a spiritual movement and so the "ultimate authority" is the spiritual concept of the "group conscience." Its voice is heard when a well-informed group gathers to arrive at a decision. The result rests on more than arithmetic, a "yes" and "no" count. Minority ideas get thoughtful attention. What about that annoying character who is always sure she's right? Better listen – maybe just this once she's right. If she is wrong, then she will – if she remembers the First Tradition as well as the Second – go along with the decision of the group conscience. Does this notion seem too cloudy? Let's think back to our first meetings. The presence of newcomers felt in those rooms was the same group conscience and it was real – welcoming us in setting up on barriers of rules.

In the 12 + 12 in the Second Tradition, you can read how the group conscience saved Bill W. from a problem about to happen.

In 1976 at the Miami International Convention the theme was "Declaration of Unity" and Bill W. made his last public talk. (He died the following spring after the convention). He said: *This we owe to AA's future: (1) To place our common welfare first; (2) To keep our fellowship united for on AA unity depends our lives and the lives of those to come.* Therefore, this tradition will provide us with the unity we need if we let God direct us through our groups and not the individual.

-Bob H.

In the Big Book's usage of the words 'obsession' and 'craving.' This is how our BB study group views these two concepts:

Physical Allergy = The phenomenon of craving – After the first drink – no recovery possible

Mental Obsession = Cannot see/act on the truth in drink - before the first drink – recovery *is* possible

An unrecovered alcoholic is powerless both after and before the first drink. Consequently:

Obsession – When the lie overcomes the truth

Recovered - When the truth overcomes the lie

So, albeit less than explicit, it is implied in the first 103 pages that the word 'craving' happens only after we take a drink of alcohol. But not so in the *Personal Stories* part of the Big Book e.g., on page 181 of *Dr. Bob's Nightmare* he mention a craving for liquor years after he sobered up. The two terms obsession and craving are intermingled in the stories in back of the book, but this separation is prevalent in the first 103 pages, where the 12 steps are explained in a more technical sense.

Intergroup 5 News

Intergroup 5 Meeting Minutes

Date: 01/02/2008

Groups Represented: New Hope, Lake Jackson, Central, Downtown, Mustard seed, Home Group – 9 people attended, representing 6 groups

Secretary's Report: Approved and accepted

Treasurer's Report: Approved and accepted as presented. Matt C. will obtain an itemized report from the answering service bill.

Office Report: Rob K., the new Office Coordinator, was appointed to serve for 2008. He will receive the standard monthly reimbursement. Rob will put his personal cell phone number in *The Message*. Volunteers are still needed! Please call the office.

Literature Report: Books and pamphlets are available for sale to all groups. Please call the office. Invoices for the missing books were found.

Activities Report: None

Web Committee Report: Where & When updates will be completed by Larry H. The winter version of the W&W will be published soon. Additions or changes in your group meetings or new meeting listings may be sent to: webmaster@intergroup5.org. You can view the IG5 web site at: (www.intergroup5.org).

District Report: Groups reported to District that they wanted the Gratitude Dinner proceeds to be given to IG5. The next Area Assembly will take place in Gainesville on January 11, 12, & 13, 2008. All Area Assemblies will take place in Gainesville until 2010. The Archivist from GSO will be attending and will make a presentation.

Old Business: IG5 will keep the High Speed Internet at the office (continuing to be paid for by the Office Coordinator).

New Business: All new literature prices will be based on the current GSO literature catalogue prices at the time we purchase the materials from them.

Submitted in Grateful Service,
Carol McG.

How Sweet It Is

My dad was born and raised in Demorest Georgia. Hall county was a dry county. When a bootlegger or moon-shiner could not be found, the alcoholics would fall back to an old stand-by; vanilla extract (60% alcohol, 120 proof, legal). The owner of a local pool hall said he didn't mind, he claimed to have the best smelling out house in town.

Mike F.

January 2008

Treasurer's report

General Fund	
Checking:	
Beginning 12/31/2007 balance	\$1,258.75
Contributions:	
Appalachicola Bay	20.00
Central	200.00
Fatithful Fivers	25.00
Grateful(detox)	141.00
Mustard Seed	39.00
Open Door	62.00
Pathfinders	41.10
Westside	20.00
Total Contributions	548.10
Less:	
Disbursements:	
Answering service	203.50
Office Coordinator Travel & related ex.	147.62
Internet monthly charge	51.96
Printing News letter/ When and where	77.75
Rent	257.01
Office supplies	24.50
State Corp fee	61.25
Telephone	45.52
Total Expense Disbursements	869.11
Ending Balance 1/31/2008	937.74
Prudent Reserve Savings:	
Beginning 12/31/2007 balance	955.35
Interest earned	0.09
Ending Balance 1/31/2008	\$955.44
Literature Fund	
Beginning 12/31/2007 Balance	1,502.34
Literature sales	
2007 sales tax paid	797.35
Sales Tax collected	60.34
Total receipts	857.69
less:	
2007 sales tax paid	547.89
Total Expenditures	547.89
Ending Balance 1/31/2008	\$1,812.14

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

Today is the anniversary of Bill W's death, January 24, 1971. What a difference one life can make. Each of us are modern descendants and bearers of the torch of freedom from alcoholism and addiction. We each are but a ripple in the pond of AA that he envisioned. Today in prayer and meditation i want to give thanks for Bill's life and legacy and for the precious gift of my own sobriety. What can i do today for someone else that would honor Bill's memory?.

January Phone Report (39 Calls Received by Volunteers)



5—12th Step
2—Al-anon
10—AA Info
21—Meeting Information
—Answering Service
1—Miscellaneous

4511 — Web Statistics

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

WE NEED YOUR STORIES!!!

We are looking for people to write their stories, traditions or step that coincides with the month. If you can be of service to share your experience, strength and hope, please send them to message@intergroup5.org. And if there is something that you want the AA community to know, i.e. birthdays, things happenings around town, new meetings or whatever, send that as well. The deadline for anything that goes in The Message is the last Wednesday of the month. We appreciate any help you can be. In Service,

Phanie and Tommy H.

Happy A.A. Anniversary

Central Group — Ann R. 2, Anna R. 2, Cynthia 2, David R. 2, Ginger H. 2, Jesse 2, Jeff D. 4, Stacey 4, Brad C. 6, Autumn 8, Alicia 17, Bill P. 20, Bill G. 25

Lloyd New Hope— Marget-4; Ralph- 21

Happy Hour/ Living Sober— Anna -1; Charles B.- 1; Ginger H.- 2; Jordan R- 2; Jamie- 2; Christy T.- 3; Sandra- 4; Richard- 5; Julia- 5; Veronica- 5; Dewitt- 7; Ralph- 21; Mike- 22

Woodville— Bill P.-20

Celebrate Your Success!