



The Message

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

TRUSTED SERVANTS

INTERGROUP 5, INC FEBRUARY 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—Heather D.
 Website—Debbie C.—Home Group
 Activities—Tracy G.—Happy Hour
 Membership—Vacant
 Newsletter—Sandy M & Julie W
 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—Vacant
 CPC—Maggi W.—Downtown
 Treatment—Kris C.—Central
 Corrections—David G—Happy Hour
 Grapevine—Vacant
 Accessibilities--Steve B.—CASA Men's
 Archives—Richard T.—Conscious
 Contact

My name is Frank, and I'm an alcoholic. I grew up the eldest of 12 children, and as each new sibling came into the world, I became further removed from my parents. Insecurities, fear of abandonment and rejection became patterns in my personality that would follow me throughout my life and into the rooms of recovery.

My parents were not alcoholics, but the stress of raising such a large family boiled over into numerous arguments that added to those fears and insecurities. We were also very poor. There was always food on the table and a roof over our heads, but money for little else. I was raised in the Catholic Church and formed an early personal relationship with God and Jesus during my first communion at age 7. Although I abandoned the Lord I so loved at an early age many times in later years, He never abandoned me, and continues to walk with me.

I was married at age 20 after the young lady I was dating became pregnant, I waited patiently till age 21 to begin drinking, but more than made up for it in the next 35 years. During that time I experienced the birth of two more sons, the drowning death of my youngest when he was 3, a divorce, a re-marriage, the birth of two more children, and another divorce. For the next 7 years, the only relationship that never seemed to end or be troublesome was my relationship with the bourbon bottle. Faced with loneliness and mounting financial problems I began a pattern of isolation. My home was my cave, not my castle, and bourbon became my friend and confidant.

But thanks to a higher power, that relationship with the bottle came to a crashing end on December 19, 2005, and it saved my life. I started drinking early on that day, and lost all track of time from 11AM to 5:30.....THE NEXT MORNING. I had so much alcohol running through my veins, I thought I was having a stroke. On top of that, I went to my car to get something, and found a half glass of bourbon, and the car had been moved. No recollection to this day. Long story short, I had my ex-wife who is a nurse drive me to the hospital. My doctor met me there, looked me square in the eye and told me I was an alcoholic, that I could NEVER have another drink. The word "alcoholic" shocked my senses. I remember sitting alone waiting to be admitted for detox, when I physically held out my hand and asked God to please help me. I prayed "I can't do this anymore by myself, I need you to lift me and carry me." I can't explain it to this day, but the desire for alcohol left me that morning. I spent four days in the hospital, during which time my friends and children emptied my house of all alcohol, and even the drink glasses I used. God was truly at work, and He still is.

Since that time, in the rooms of AA and recovery I found a sponsor, accountability partners, friendships, peace and the comfort of knowing I am not alone in my walk. I still have the insecurities and fears, but I have hope through prayer and this program. Alcohol no longer medicates and impairs my progress. I thank God for that, and can draw from His strength each time I say the Step 3 and Serenity Prayers. I have been sober for three years and a month now, and count each new day sober as a blessing. I am in a step study group, I continue to work the steps, I continue to rely on the program, and I keep coming back because it works when I work it....it really does.

Thanks for letting me share, Frank H.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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 Melbourne, FL 32902



EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE



Step Two

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

In order to take the second step, I had to have faith that I could be restored to sanity. In exchange for my faith, this step gave me hope. I saw that others in Alcoholics Anonymous led contented lives and were sane; all I had to do was believe that I was not a unique case. In my experience, it mattered very little who or what my Higher Power was. The point is that there is a power greater than myself. *Bill's Story* and *We Agnostics* state that we ought to choose our own conception of a Higher Power. I started with the group as my Higher Power. Over my period of sobriety, my conception of a Higher Power has changed. I feel that if my understanding of my Higher Power is not growing, then I am not growing.

In my understanding, the second step comes to fruition after we work the tenth step. In the chapter *Into Action* the tenth step promises state, "For by this time sanity will have returned." Regardless of whether one is atheist, agnostic, Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Taoist, Hindu, or any other religion, I believe we can all work the second step. I am very grateful to the atheist in the first 100 members who insisted that the third and eleventh step included the words "as we understand Him." If I had to accept Jesus Christ or any other religious figure as my Higher Power in order to work the second step, I do not believe I would have gotten sober. *We Agnostics* states, "We found the Great Reality deep down within us." I had to look inward in order to find my own conception of a Higher Power. I have to continually work the second step in order to develop a degree of humility that will allow me to stay sober.

Cameron F.

Tradition Two

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 important to AA because it allows all members in the group to be equal - everyone in the group has an equal voice. Alcoholics have been known to have big egos and by deliberately not having leaders, tradition two keeps the fellowship running as smoothly as possible. If leaders governed - many members would be discouraged and they would stay away. If a leader was in charge, the harmony of the group would be severely compromised and discord would result. By not having "leaders" dictate, the members of a group develop their own guidelines to maintain order and the focus of the group. The group chairperson facilitates the meeting - keeps the structure and focus as determined by the group.

The group conscience is important because it determines not only the style of the meeting (open, speaker meeting, step or tradition studies, etc.) but also it decides monetary matters, elects representatives for the intergroup responsibilities and picks group leaders such as the chairperson, secretary, and treasurer of the individual group.

Tradition Two is vital to keep the fellowship of AA healthy - all alcoholics and people who desire to stop drinking need to have meetings where they can feel accepted and able to express themselves without the fear of a leader's judgment.

Anonymous

EVERYONE CAN'T BE IN YOUR FRONT ROW

Life is a theater so invite your audiences carefully. Not everyone is healthy enough to have a FRONT ROW seat in our lives. There are some people in your life that need to be loved from a distance. It's amazing what you can accomplish when you let go or at least minimize your time with draining, negative, incompatible, not-going anywhere relationships, friendships, fellowships, and family:

Everyone Can't Be in Your FRONT ROW.

Observe the relationships around you. Pay attention to: Which ones lift and which ones lean? Which ones encourage and which ones discourage? Which ones are a path of growth uphill and which ones are just going downhill? When you leave certain people, do you feel better or feel worse?

Everyone Can't Be in Your FRONT ROW.

The more you seek God and the things of God, the more you seek quality; the more you seek not just the hand of God but the face of God, the more you seek things honorable; the more you seek growth, peace of mind, love and truth around you, the easier it will become for you to decide who gets to sit in the FRONT ROW and who should be moved to the BALCONY of your life.

Everyone Can't Be in Your FRONT ROW.

You cannot change the people around you...but you can change the people you are around. Ask God for wisdom and discernment and choose wisely the people who sit in the FRONT ROW of your life. Remember that FRONT ROW seats are for special and deserving people and those who sit in your FRONT ROW should be chosen carefully.

Everyone Can't Be in Your FRONT ROW.

Intergroup 5 News

INTERGROUP 5 MEETING MINUTES JANUARY 2009

Groups Represented: Central, Downtown, Happy Hour, Home, Lake Jackson, Living Sober, Lloyd New Hope, Nite Owl and Open Door. 8 IG5 representatives were present. 14 people attended.

Secretary's Report: Approved and accepted.

Treasurer's Report: Approved and accepted.

Office Report: The **Winter Where and When** has been printed and distributed. Volunteers to answer the phone are always needed. Rob K., the Office Coordinator, has decided to take some time off and will provide us with a position description.

Literature Report: Another order of the hardback Big Books has been requested.

Activities Report: The Holiday Dinner on was a smashing success! Not a mere crumb leftover. Laura and everyone that helped did a great job. And to DJ Frank, we really send out a big thanks to you!

Web Committee Report: No report but please log on to our website (www.intergroup5.org) and see what's out there. If anyone is interested in adding a page to the site, please contact the Web Master, Debbie C..

District Report: 2 Positions are still open at the District level - Grapevine Representative and Public Information.

12 Step News: Jeff D. is putting together some information packets (meeting listings and a 12-step phone listing) for our volunteers. Please contact him if you are interested in being on the list.

Old Business: We are hoping to have the new phone system up & running around February 1st. The one time \$50.00 start was previously approved.

New Business: 1) Maggie W. volunteered to be "the voice" on our new answering service. She will have her work cut out for her because there are a lot of meetings in this area to announce.

2) Our website will allow 10 pictures to be displayed. Not wanting to show favoritism a motion was made for the pictures to be of the Intergroup Office. We can also have a video and that's where we'll show the locations of our groups with the address and name of the group displayed.

New Officers for Intergroup 5: Craig F. - Chair (Living Sober), Mike F. - Vice Chair (New Hope), Christy T. - Secretary (Happy Hour), Carol H. - Treasurer (New Hope), Tracy G. - Activities Chair (Happy Hour). The officers will assume their 2-year commitments in January 2009.

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

MUSTARD SEED MEETING IS MOVING

Beginning February 3, 2009, the Mustard Seed group will be meeting at the Timberlane Church of Christ located at 3569 Timberlane School Road. Tuesday and Thursday meetings start at 12:30 PM and you may enter at the back left of the Church. The Monday evening meeting is at 6:00 PM. Any questions call Diz 385-2112.

NEW MEETING - VA CLINIC

1607 St. James Court
Wednesdays at 6:45 p.m.

WESTSIDE - Big Book Study
Bethel Methodist Church Fellowship Hall
Tuesdays at ****7:00**** p.m.

SOUTHSIDE group has dissolved.

Happy A.A. January Anniversary

Bradfordville: Kris - 5, Michelle Y. - 6,
Ann M. - 26, Anne S.-35

Living Sober, Happy Hour & Conscious Contact:
Doug M. - 1, David M, - 2, Ginger - 3, Jamie - 3,
Jess G. - 3, Jordan R. - 3, Christy T. - 4,
Sandra M. - 5, Julia s. - 6, Richard S. - 6,
DeWitt R. - 8, Pat W. - 8

Central : Doug W. - 1, Jim D. - 1, Mark H. - 1.
Paul C. - 1, Thomas - 1, Susan J. - 1, Ann - 3,
Cynthia - 3, David R. - 3, Katy R. - 3, Doug D. - 5,
Jeff D. - 5, Stacey A. - 5, Brad - 7, Autumn - 9,
Grant - 17, Alicia - 18, Bill P. - 21, Bill G. - 26

Lake Jackson: Tom B. - 4

Monticello Serenity: Jim A. - 20

Mustard Seed: Jim H. - 23



EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS

INTERGROUP 5 NEWS

Web statistics - 4,649 pages sent from the Intergroup 5 website. The following 38 calls were answered by volunteers:

12 step-0, Al-anon-1, AA info-5, Meeting info-17, Misc-3.

IMPORTANT FEBRUARY DATES IN A.A. HISTORY

Feb 1938 - Rockefeller gives \$5,000 to AA. - Saves AA from professionalization.
Feb 1940 - 1st AA clubhouse opens at 334-1/2 West 24th Street, NYC.
Feb 1951 - Fortune magazine article about AA. New York reprints in pamphlet form for many years.
Feb 1963 - Harpers carries article critical of AA.
Feb 1981 - 1st issue of "Markings" AA Archives Newsletter is published.
Feb 1 or 2, 1942 - Ruth Hock, AA's 1st paid secretary, resigns to get married and move to Ohio
Feb 8, 1940 - Rockefeller dinner for AA's
Feb 8, 1940 - Houston Press ran first of 6 anonymous articles on AA by Larry Jewell
Feb 9, 2002 - Sue Smith Windows, Dr Bob's daughter died.
Feb 11, 1937 - First New Jersey meeting was held at the home of Hank P ("The Unbeliever" in the first edition).
Feb 11, 1938 - Clarence S. ("Home Brewmeister" 1st-3rd edition) sobriety date.
Feb 14, 1971 - AA groups worldwide hold memorial service for Bill W.
Feb 14, 2000 - William Y., "California Bill" dies in Winston Salem, NC.
Feb 15, 1918 - Sue Smith Windows, Dr. Bob's adopted daughter, was born.
Feb 18, 1943 - During gas rationing in WWII, AA's are granted right to use cars for 12th step work in emergencies.
Feb 19, 1967 - Father "John Doe" (Ralph Phau), 1st Catholic Priest in AA dies.
Feb 23, 1959 - AA granted "Recording for the Blind" permission to tape the Big Book.

Diz T.

CONFERENCES & OTHER EVENTS

FLINT RIVER ROUNDUP

The 12th annual Flint River Roundup will be held Friday-Sunday March 13-15, 2009 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Albany, Georgia. The hotel has a 1000 seat room for our conference. The featured speakers include Trish W. from Roanoke, VA who will kick off the conference with a Relationships workshop Friday at 4:00 PM. She will also speak on Saturday afternoon. James P. of Punta Gorda, FL will speak Friday night at 7:30 p.m. Debbie C. from Tallahassee will speak Saturday at 9:30 a.m. followed by another Debi C., our Al-anon speaker from Enterprise, AL at 11:30 AM. June G. from LA will hold a workshop on Sex, Relationships and the Traditions on Saturday afternoon and will speak on Saturday night. On Sunday morning, the conference will close with John C. from Merriantown, PA. John is also a former Georgia resident.

The Flint River famous Fish fry which is free to all attendees will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday. Raffles and ice cream socials will be held on Friday and Saturday nights. There will also be a dance on Saturday night.

Registration is \$20 per member and registration forms can be mailed to P.O. Box 7461 Bainbridge, GA 39818. Flyers can be found in most meeting rooms in Tallahassee or online at: www.FlintRiverRoundup.org. Reservations for the hotel can be made by calling 877-782-9444. Room rates are \$84 per night.

BTG/Corrections/TF Committee Meeting

February 8, 2009, 3:00 p.m.
909 Gadsden Street
Tallahassee, FL

District 5 Business Meeting

February 18, 2009, 7:00 p.m.
Faith Presbyterian Church
Tallahassee, FL

53rd Florida State Convention

July 29-August 2, 2009
Hyatt Regency Jacksonville
225 East Coastline Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32202