



The Message

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

TRUSTED SERVANTS

INTERGROUP 5, INC SEPTEMBER 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—Vacant

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—Vacant

CPC—Vacant

Treatment/BTG—Kris C.—Central

Corrections—David G.—Happy Hour

Grapevine—Michael L.—Happy Hour

Accessibilities—Vacant

Archives—Vacant

CONTACT INFORMATION

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When I walked into the doors of AA in Farmers' Branch, Texas in 1986, my overwhelming first thought was; "So this is where they have been hiding all the people like me"! That simple act of surrender ended years of a desperate daily struggle to control and conquer my demons, manifested by my destructive abuse of alcohol.

I'm of the opinion that my background shows that alcohol is no respecter of education, morality, social strata, nor home environment. I was raised in a religious home, by educated, nondrinking parents who devoted themselves to teaching me all the right things; honesty, integrity, compassion for others and the value of hard work. It was a secure and reasonably happy environment, and I never even saw anyone take a drink until I was twelve years old. The disease of alcoholism later blasted away all those advantages and left me defenseless and powerless to fight against its ravages.

As a teenager, I experimented with alcohol a few times, but it did not exert its obsessive grip on me until I moved away from home to start college. Then in a matter of a few months, I was drinking daily and in excess. I found myself arranging my part time work so as to be around alcohol, and ended up working at a hotel, which had a popular bar and a friendly bartender who was generous with the free drinks to employees. By the time I graduated from college (so they tell me), the number of at first embarrassing, then increasingly dangerous episodes of blackout drinking multiplied dramatically. Armed with a degree in finance and accounting, my first career job in, of all places, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. ended with the distinction of being the first person in the history of the firm that they actually had to fire. That humiliation was not enough to make me see my disease and myself, and I soon became embroiled in a financial scandal, which threatened to cause my criminal indictment and the possibility of a prison term. This was so serious and frightening that, like the Big Book says, circumstances sufficiently motivated me to stop drinking on my own, because, as bad as my drinking was, I had not yet crossed over that subtle line to full blown alcoholism.

After more than a year being dry, not sober, spurred on by terror and guilt, I managed to extricate myself from that horrific situation, and even had the prospect of a new and important job in Dallas, Texas. The Company even flew me out for an interview, and to my amazement, I landed the job! As I sat in the DFW airport, I reflected on the incredible change of circumstance of that past year, from possible prison to this fabulous big job in Dallas, and how fortunate I had been. And I realized the only thing to do was to celebrate right there in the airport by having a drink! Needless to say, they had to pour me out of the plane when I finally arrived home, and it was at that moment that I crossed over into being a "real" alcoholic.

The next few years brought much more heartache and pain, but the strongest memory was the increasing awareness of my problem with alcohol, and my more and more frequent and desperate attempts to control or stop. This eventually became a daily battle with the familiar ritual of swearing off booze forever every morning and slowly rationalizing things so that by every evening I was off to the races again. The frantic downward spiral of self hate and dramatic demoralization are feelings that every person in recovery can relate to.

(cont. on page 2)

Experience, Strength and Hope

Step Nine

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

This was definitely one of those places in the program where I could look back and really tell that God was with me. The other place, of course was in the 5th step. All the courage I had was completely insufficient for the task at hand but when it was all over, I realized that there had been another with me, a power so great that something had been accomplished that I was incapable of. The essential part of the 5th step for me was not the humiliation of having to give up my darkest secrets, but coming face to face with the fact of God. Either He was or He wasn't. What if I put my trust in Him and He wasn't? Even if He was, would He be there for me? Those are the real questions for me. Later on I saw that indeed He had been there for me. Imagine that, me! Unbelievable!

So what does all that have to do with the 9th step, the one I am really supposed to be writing about? Well for me, the experience of sitting down with another human being to make amends required another huge leap of faith. Once more I was faced squarely with the proposition that either He was and that this program is inspired by Him or it was all a grand hoax.

This step came along at a very opportune moment for me. I was beginning to feel pretty proud of myself; why just look at what I had accomplished. I really needed a good solid dose of humility and I got it. The real gift I got from this step was another experience with the power greater than myself that carried me through a work that I couldn't have done by myself. If the 5th step was the coffin I laid my monstrous ego in, the 9th was nailing the lid shut.

After finishing the 9th, I could truly say that my past was behind me and I could walk away a free man. The skill I began to learn in this step has served me well, when I have observed its practice.

I'll close with the advice given to me by an old timer: after you have said what you are about and what you did, and sincerely asked how you could set things right; "shut up!" or do what I did and create another amend. Happy trudging.

PAT

Tradition Nine

A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

The day I was asked to write some thoughts on the 9th Tradition, I was at a favorite Twelve and Twelve Step meeting. We spent the first five minutes or so as a group conscience trying to figure out where we'd left off the week before and how best to proceed. It was classic AA. Kind of like having a charlie-horse with a huge grin on your face. My point being, we won't *ever* have to worry too much about AA as such being *organized*. The wonderful news, though, is that while as a group we may look a bit disheveled and disorganized from time to time, Alcoholics Anonymous is based upon but one authority, a loving God who provides all the spiritual direction and guidance necessary for our continued success. I have been in many meetings where things have gone "south" - and out of control in ways much more heart-wrenching than forgetting what page we're on. But even in those instances, I have come to trust and believe in God's divine control and that "Nothing, absolutely nothing happens in God's world by mistake."

The importance of a *servant's heart* is written all over the part of this Tradition that speaks to our service boards and committees being responsible to those they serve - and another reason that Alcoholics Anonymous has been so successful. AA teaches us the magnitude of selflessly helping others, something so fundamentally foreign to me when I first got here. And as we learn that helping others is essential to our own recovery, we discover along the way that it's impossible to stay stuck in ourselves when God asks AA - **us** - to be there whenever a hand reaches out for help.

Elizabeth C.

(cont. from page 1)

Then came that moment that we in AA call the "bottom". As I was driving along a road that passed my dingy, run down watering hole, I once again vainly tried to summon the courage to just drive on past, something I had failed to do almost every day for two or more years. But on this day, my fear and self loathing boiled over and, in my car, I cried out to God for help. Although I had prayed many times in the past for God to get me out of jams, this time something in me gave up, and I felt for the first time a real and personal connection with something bigger than me. In a miraculous moment I felt the battle of years leave me and I drove on past my nemesis in complete peace. The next day I appeared at the doors of AA.

In the years since, I have truly regained life. The spiritual journey shown to me by Alcoholics Anonymous has had many steps forward and then back, and many times I have been reluctant to see the world through the AA lens. But above all else, this path which I am privileged to walk only by Grace, has allowed me to fully embrace life, to be fully engaged in all life has to offer, to experience both the high points and the bruises. And, in an amazing way, this turns out to be what I was looking for all along.

WILL C.

Intergroup 5 News

INTERGROUP 5 MEETING MINUTES AUGUST 5, 2009

Groups Represented: Happy Hour, Lloyd New Hope, Central, Home Group, Bradfordville, Open Door, Living Sober, Downtown Young People's Group and Woodville. 12 people attended; 6 Intergroup rep's were present.

Secretary's Report: After her spelling was corrected, the minutes were approved and accepted.

Treasurer's Report: Absent; some discrepancies on the account. Will have Carol research.

Office Report: Pete reported that the phone system has taken in many calls and he's very satisfied with the results. He also volunteered to take on the role of Literature Coordinator. Until the Literature bank account has the new signature cards Pete will meet with Matt C. so we can get out an order of much needed books.

Literature Report: Pete S. new Literature Coordinator

Activities Report: Absent; December 12th still date for Holiday Party. Need to start looking for a speaker.

Web Committee Report: Meeting's have been updated on Website. Debbie mentioned the Google calendar and how this might be more user friendly for the meeting list. She will look into this.

District Report: A climate-controlled storage shed has been rented for the archives to be housed.

12 Step Coordinator: Absent

Old Business: Discussion of speaker for holiday party but Activities Coordinator absent.

New Business: Checking account.

Happy, Joyous & Free,
Christy T.

NEW MEETINGS

The Grateful Group

TMH Behavioral Health Center
1616 Physicians Drive
Cafeteria on 1st Floor
Tallahassee, FL
Wednesdays, Fridays & Sundays @ 8:00 p.m.
Contact: Trey McN. 591-1877

Havana Sobriety Group

7th Avenue
Community Center across from Police Station
Havana, FL
Sundays @ 7:00 p.m.

The 705 Meeting

Waukeenah United Methodist Church
81 Methodist Church Road
Hwy 27 & 259
Waukeenah, FL
Mondays @ 7:05 p.m.

VA

Mahan Drive
Tallahassee, FL
Wednesdays @ 6:45 p.m.
Everyone is welcome. Not limited to Veterans

WESTSIDE GROUP

Bethel Methodist Church Fellowship Hall
Tallahassee, FL
Tuesdays @ 7:00 p.m.
Pizza and Pepsi every 2nd Tuesday of the month

Happy A.A. August Anniversary

Bradfordville: Mark-2

Central : Adria-1, Dana H.-1, Dara-1, Dru-1, Kristin-1, Lynne-1, Michael-1, Scott M.-2, Paula N.-3, Laura-5, Mark H.-5, Steve B.-6, Charlie B.-9, Suzy A.-15, Jeanie- 19, James M.-23, Larry H.-25, Jim G.-26, Tony D.-28

Monticello Serenity: Kay-1, Tony-9, Rowena-32

Mustard Seed: Emily B.-1, Sandy M.-2



EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS

INTERGROUP 5 NEWS

Web stats: 4,712 pages were sent from the Intergroup 5 website. The following 52 calls were answered by volunteers:

12 Step	1
Al-Anon	1
AA info	15
Meeting Info	28
Misc.	7

We always need more volunteers!!!!



Due to the downturn in the economy, AA will NO LONGER be dues and membership "Free" as has been the case for almost 75 years. Like many businesses, AA will now be charging for some things that used to be free, such as:

1--Being Rocketed into the 4th Dimension---\$49.99 per trip, fuel surcharge applies, extra baggage NOT included. 5th dimension trips optional. See your sponsor for details.

2--Sponsorship--was free, NOW \$9.99 per month, with 4 visits/20 phone calls per month free, after that, \$2.00 each.

3--Membership Dues now \$29.99/month, 10% discount for a 1-year plan.

4--Seating charges--Each seat now \$1.00 per meeting, with a 20% discount for the 90-in-90 plan.

5--Pink Cloud was free, NOW \$14.99 per cloud, with a \$5.00 per event environmental cleanup fee. These are the NEW ozone-free Pink Clouds that do NOT add to global warming.

6--Coffee to be \$1.50 per cup, with a 10% discount for 5 or more cups.

7--Hugs now will be \$2.50 each.

8--Conscious Contact with GOD now \$9.99/month, with the first 450 minutes free, then 0.10 cents/minute fee over.

New Double your minutes for life plan is a low \$49.99 one time charge. Holidays and weekends extra, see rate schedule, as GOD is VERY busy.

9--Accidental cell phone going off charge now set at \$25.00 per episode.

10--"I've been Thinking" fees to now be \$3.00 each, with a relapse reentry fee of only \$99.99 each, if you're lucky enough to make it back into the rooms.

11-Publication of A.A. Birthdays in Lifeline fees will be \$5.00 per 5 years of sobriety. \$5.00 for 1 - 5 years, \$10 for 5 - 10 years, etc. Please, void where prohibited by law, AA reserves the right to change none, all, or some of these rates at anytime, with no notice to you. If you need a notice of change of rates, a written request may be sent to headquarters in new York, of course, a \$10.00 fee applies.

NOTE: The editor does not accept responsibility for your reaction to this article.

CONFERENCES AND OTHER EVENTS

46th Women's International Conference

February 11-14, 2010

Doubletree Hotel

5780 Major Boulevard

Orlando, FL 32819

SIGNIFICANT SEPTEMBER DATES IN A.A. HISTORY

Sept 1930 - Bill wrote 4th (last) promise in family Bible to quit drinking.

Sept 1939 - group started by Earl Treat in Chicago.

Sept 1940 - AA group started in Toledo by Duke P & others.

Sept 1940 - Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases gives Big Book unfavorable review.

Sept 1946 - Bill & Dr. Bob both publicly endorsed National Committee Education Alcoholism founded by Marty Mann

Sept 1946 - 1st A.A. group in Mexico.

Sept 1948 - Bob writes article for Grapevine on AA "Fundamentals-- In Retrospect".

Sept 1949 - 1st issue of Grapevine published in "pocketbook" size.

Sept 1, 1939 - 1st AA group founded in Chicago.

Sept 11, 2001 - 30 Vesey St, New York. Location of AA's first office is destroyed during the World Trade Center attack.

Sept 12, 1942 - U.S. Assist. Surgeon General Kolb speaks at dinner for Bill and Dr Bob.

Sept 13, 1937 - Florence Rankin, 1st female in AA in NY.

Sept 13, 1941 - WHJP in Jacksonville, FL airs Spotlight on AA.

Sept 17, 1954 - Bill D, AA #3 passes away.

Sept 18, 1947 - Dallas Central Office opens its doors.

Sept 19, 1965 - The Saturday Evening Post publishes article "Alcoholics Can Be Cured - Despite AA"

Sept 19, 1975 - Jack Alexander, author of original Saturday Evening Post article, passes away

Sept 21, 1938 - Bill Wilson & Hank Parkhurst form Works Publishing Co.

Sept 24, 1940 - Bill 12th steps Bobbie B, who later replaced Ruth Hock as his secretary in NY.

Sept 30, 1939 - article in Liberty magazine, "Alcoholics and God" by Morris Markey.

DIZ T.