

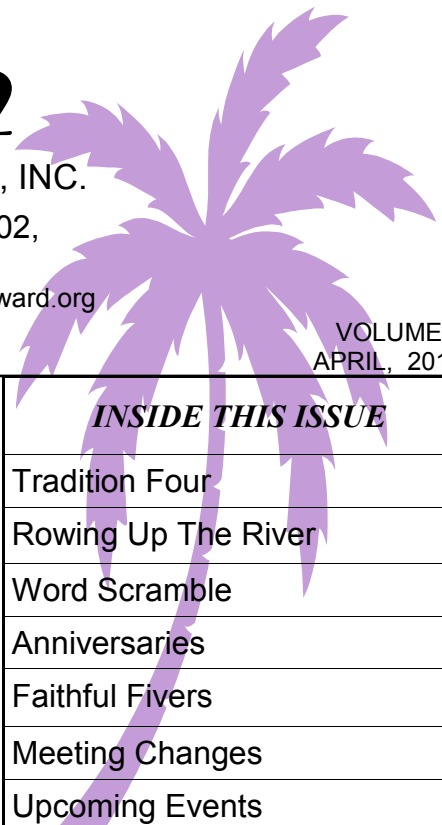


ROOM 502

BROWARD COUNTY INTERGROUP, INC.

305 South Andrews Avenue, Room 502,
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Phone 954-462-0265, 954-462-7202; www.aabroward.org



VOLUME 4
APRIL, 2015

STEP 4: "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

Fear and the Fourth Step

How often have you heard, "I know I should start on my Fourth Step, but I'm terrified!"? I know guys in the Fellowship who, when active, were flat-out reckless. But take these very same go-for-broke guys, and suggest it's time to do a Fourth Step and you've never seen such cagey deliberation, such wariness, such humorless, frozen-faced fear.

Where does this terror come from? Have we somehow unknowingly fostered this fear? Have we turned the Fourth Step into something that bears almost no resemblance to the original process?

At other times, we seem to let our disease come up with palliatives to put off doing a Fourth. For instance, when a newer member tells her sponsor she's afraid of tackling the Fourth Step, this well-meaning sponsor tells her with the best of intentions not to worry, or to hold off for a couple of years. Why? To stay irritable, restless, and discontented for two more years?

Sometimes, we make the Fourth Step just about impossible to do. Where did the suggestion "Write your life story" come from, for example? Very few of us have time to write an autobiography. And even if we did, how much of it would actually contain an inventory of the resentments, fears, and guilt that we have to get rid of? Then there are those recovery publications that peddle twenty-page inventories or guides. Are we writing federal legislation or doing an inventory?

Here's another new twist: "Don't forget to put down your assets, too." Why? Has anyone you know ever gotten drunk over an asset? Has anyone ever wanted to get rid of his or her assets? Does Step Five say to share the exact nature of our assets? Is it possible that our disease has come up with yet another way to water down this Step?

Shouldn't we stick to the original analogy Bill W. used? He chose the word "inventory." He did not choose "balance sheet." Assets go on balance sheets. On one tape recording, Bill W. said that part of the reason for publishing the Big Book was to "nail it down in black and white so the drunks couldn't wiggle out of it."

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November 1946 Vol. 3 No. 6



Concept IV

Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional "Right of Participation," taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

Tradition 4: "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole."

Tradition Four

The fourth of a new series of articles explaining The Twelve Traditions. . .

AUTONOMY is a ten-dollar word. But in relation to us, it means very simply that every AA group can manage its affairs exactly as it pleases, except when AA as a whole is threatened. Comes now the same question raised in Tradition One. Isn't such liberty foolishly dangerous?

Over the years every conceivable deviation from our Twelve Steps and Traditions has been tried. That was sure to be, since we are so largely a band of ego-driven individualists. Children of chaos, we have defiantly played with every brand of fire, only to emerge unharmed and, we think, wiser. These very deviations created a vast process of trial and error which, under the grace of God, has brought us to where we stand today.

When AA's Traditions were first published in 1945, we had become sure that an AA group could stand almost any amount of battering. We saw that the group, exactly like the individual, must eventually conform to whatever tested principles would guarantee survival. We had discovered that there was perfect safety in the process of trial and error. So confident of this had we become that the original statement of AA tradition carried this significant sentence: "Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an AA group provided that as a group they have no other affiliation."

This meant, of course, that we had been given the courage to declare each AA group an individual entity, strictly reliant on its own conscience as a guide to action. In charting this enormous expanse of freedom we found it necessary to post only two storm signals. A group ought not do anything which would greatly injure AA as a whole, nor ought it affiliate itself with anything or anybody else. There would be real danger should we commence to call some groups "wet," others "dry," still others "Republican" or "Communist," and yet others "Catholic" or "Protestant." The AA group would have to stick to its course or be hopelessly lost. Sobriety had to be its sole objective. In all other respects there was perfect freedom of will and action. Every group had the right to be wrong.

When AA was still young, lots of eager groups were forming. In a town we'll call Middleton, a real crackerjack had started up. The townspeople were hot as firecrackers about it. Star-gazing, the elders dreamed of innovations. They figured the town needed a great big alcoholic center, a kind of pilot plant AA groups could duplicate everywhere. Beginning on the ground floor there would be a club; in the second story they would sober up drunks and hand them currency for their back debts; the third deck would house an educational project. . . quite noncontroversial, of course. In imagination the gleaming center was to go up several stories more, but three would do for a start. This would all take a lot of money. . . other people's money. Believe it or not, wealthy townsfolk bought the idea.

There were, though, a few conservative dissenters among the alcoholics. They wrote the Foundation, AA's headquarters in New York, wanting to know about this sort of streamlining. They understood that the elders, just to nail things down good, were about to apply to the Foundation for a charter. These few were disturbed and skeptical.

Of course there was a promoter in the deal. . . a super-promoter. By his eloquence he allayed all fears, despite advice from the Foundation that it could issue no charter, and that ventures which mixed an AA group up with medication and education had come to sticky ends elsewhere. To make things safer, the promoter organized three corporations and became president of them all. Freshly painted, the new center shone. The warmth of it all spread through the town. Soon things began to hum. To insure foolproof, continuous operation, 61 rules and regulations were adopted.

Continued from Page 1

Nowhere in the Fourth Step section of the Big Book does it even once mention the word "asset." Could it be that we drunks are trying our best to "wiggle out" of this simple process?

Remember the classic scene from old gangster movies? The setting is an interrogation room at the police station. The veteran detective wants information from the nervous suspect, and in a tired, I've-been-here-before voice, says: "Okay, Louie. We can do this one of two ways: the hard way or the easy way." It's the same with the Fourth Step. We can do it one of two ways. The easy way is between pages 63 and 71 of the Big Book.

—Ted D. Teaneck, New Jersey—

Reprinted from *Grapevine*
March 2007 Vol. 63 Issue 10.

Continued from Page 2

But alas, this bright scene was not long in darkening. Confusion replaced serenity. It was found that some drunks yearned for education, but doubted if they were alcoholics. The personality defects of others could be cured maybe with a loan. Some were club-minded, but it was just a question of taking care of the lonely heart. Sometimes the swarming applicants would go for all three floors. Some would start at the top and come through to the bottom, becoming club members, others started in the club, pitched a binge, were hospitalized, then graduated to education on the third floor. It was a beehive of activity, all right, but unlike a beehive, it was confusion compounded. An AA group, as such, simply couldn't handle this sort of a project. All too late that was discovered. Then came the inevitable explosion. . .something like that day the boiler burst in Wombly's Clapboard Factory. A chill choke-damp of fear and frustration fell over the group.

When that lifted, a wonderful thing had happened. The head promoter wrote the Foundation of- fice. He said he wished he'd paid some attention to AA experience. Then he did something else that was to become an AA classic. It all went on a little card about golf-score size. The cover read: "Middleton Group No. One. Rule No. 62." Once the card was unfolded, a single pungent sentence leaped to the eye: "Don't take yourself too damn seriously."

Thus it was that under Tradition Four an AA group had exercised its right to be wrong. Moreover, it had performed a great service for Alcoholics Anonymous, because it had been humbly willing to apply the lessons it learned. It had picked itself up with a laugh and gone on to better things. Even the chief architect, standing in the ruins of his dream, could laugh at himself. . .and that is the very acme of humility.

—Bill W.—

Reprinted from *Grapevine*
August 1952 Vol.9 Issue 3

*Things we cannot change,
He will be missed by all who know him.
Ray M.*

Room 502 welcomes your thoughts and experiences with A.A. We love to run articles written by local people in A.A. so, let us know about your experiences with Alcoholics Anonymous, or in your local home-group. **Contact us at help@aabroward.org or will@aabroward.org**

Rowing Up the River

After he started feeling worse sober, he realized that he needed to do things differently

Before I picked up a drink at the somewhat late age of 19, I thought there must be something wrong with me, even reading books on psychology and psychiatry to try to figure it out. Those thoughts and feelings were no longer a concern for a while after I started drinking, as drinking made me feel the way other people looked and I was able to join the party. It gave me a feeling of well being, a false one but I believed the lie.

When I got to AA, the first three steps looked like the mental gymnastics my church wanted me to perform as a youth. I didn't feel insane until awhile after I went off my liquid medication, but then I felt like I'd discovered a new kind of mental illness. I experienced mood swings, anxiety, fear and seldom missed a mole hill to turn into a mountain. I often felt impending doom and it didn't occur to me that it might just be that doom is not impending and that this just meant that my feelings were setting off a false alarm. They were all mixed up, lacking labels and seemed to tell me that something was dreadfully amiss in my life and it was even worse that I couldn't work out what it was.

I got sober in Sydney in 1974 when there was a lot of talk about drinking in meetings and very little about recovery. The message I seemed to get was that the problem was alcohol and the solution was recovery, so I should be OK if I'd stopped drinking. I wondered if I was really an alcoholic because my job as a high school teacher seemed even harder to handle, partly because my mood swings made me a nice guy one day and a tyrant the next. I only started to figure out what the real problem was after I heard a guy on a tape I bought on a trip back the US to visit family say, "The second and fifth drinks are caused by alcohol but the first is caused by sobriety. It just gets so rotten you've got to drink."

This helped me to understand that AA is about staying sober, not just getting reminded that I shouldn't drink. I started seeking meetings that were more about recovery, more about the message rather than the mess.

Sometimes I would hear someone in a meeting say that insanity is doing the same thing over and over and thinking that I could get different results. I was still doing that with an over-eating problem when I was nearly 30 years sober, thinking that I was eating sensibly and this would eventually mean that I would start losing weight even though there was no evidence of that happening. I think now that that may be the truth but not the whole truth.

I came across someone recently who said that insanity is a misperception of reality. I feel now that I went through life wearing dark colored glasses that only began to clear and eventually even have a bit of a rosy tint when I'd been sober and working the Steps for some time.

I can see now that the way I see the world is affected as much by what is inside me as what is outside. I recall a woman in a meeting say that she couldn't do much about her feelings, but she could change her attitudes and the feelings tend to follow. My feelings no longer bother me as they are like warning signs when there is no longer anything to warn me about.

I have come across three definitions of sanity that seem clear and simple to me:

1. The ability to adjust to reality.
2. Living in harmony with reality.
3. Seeing things as they really are.

When I came across the first of these in a novel, it seemed that this was what the Steps, Traditions, Serenity Prayer and a lot of the slogans in meetings were really about, adjusting to reality. Reality was once something that I tried to escape. I did this with fantasy, daydreaming and involvement with books, TV, movies and though-absorbing activities long before I started drinking, to take my mind off what I thought was happening rather than trying to deal with it. I now feel that there was never anything wrong with reality, just that my alcoholism caused me to perceive it as a monster. I'm quite fond of it now. It is like in the fellowship where we love and accept each other as we are and not in spite of what we are.

I had a "kill the messenger" approach to uncomfortable feelings. Someone once explained to me that my feelings are a bit like the warning lights and indicators on a car's dashboard.

When I got sober, it seemed that most of them were flashing and they lacked labels, just telling me that just about everything was wrong with me and my life. Over time, they got labels and began, at least occasionally, providing me with useful information. For example, a feeling of guilt could get me to try to work out why I feel guilty and try to do something about it. I could stop or start doing something, pray or try to make amends.

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Bridging The Gap

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Vero Beach, FL 32969-0275
(772)360-7949

District 9 General Service

P.O. Box 100126
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33310

A.A. Birthdays

April Celebrants

Men in Recovery

Paul W. ~ 14yrs.
Tom C. ~ 6yrs.
Mark R. ~ 23yrs.
Michael C. ~ 28yrs.

East Naples Men's

Bill G. ~ 29yrs.
Bob C. ~ 27yrs.
Tim F. ~ 26yrs.
Leroy ~ 21yrs.
Bob G. ~ 10yrs.
Brian S. ~ 8yrs.
Nils ~ 8yrs.
Jerry L. ~ 5yrs.

Each Day A New Beginning

Anthony D. ~ 5yrs.
Edna C. ~ 6yrs.

One Day At A Time

Tammi Jo ~ 4yrs.
Eddie M. ~ 22yrs

Serenity All Together

Joe G. ~ 17yrs.
Leon V. ~ 38yrs.
Warren M. ~ 33yrs.

You Are Not Alone

Victor ~ 14yrs.
Phil ~ 27yrs.

Ft. Lauderdale Women's

Carla K. ~ 9yrs.
Susan H. ~ 27yrs.

Mountain Group

Michele O. ~ 6yrs.
Craig L. ~ 9yrs.
Rob B. ~ 32yrs.

WBC Lunch Bunch

Jill ~ 6yrs.
Steve T. ~ 6yrs.
Chris ~ 8yrs.
Jessica ~ 10yrs.
Barbara ~ 10yrs.
Mike ~ 11yrs.

Holly ~ 12yrs.
Dennis ~ 13yrs.
Nina ~ 15yrs.
Collene ~ 15yrs.
Camilo M. ~ 25yrs.
Pat ~ 33yrs.

Saturday Morning Awareness

Chucky ~ 4yrs.
Craig S. ~ 4yrs.

Mountain Group

Evonne. ~ 2yrs.

Oakland Park

Lin F. ~ 43yrs.
Paul P. ~ 28yrs.

*February Celebrants
(not previously submitted)*

Tamarac Group

Jimmie C. ~ 18yrs.
Melinda B. ~ 9yrs
Shelby ~ 12yrs.

*March Celebrants
(not previously submitted)*

Tamarac Group

Al K. ~ 11yrs.
John ~ 5yrs.
Colleen ~ S. 28yrs.

It's your Birthday!

Many AA members across the country share their Anniversary by giving a dollar or two, for each year of their sobriety to their Intergroup Office. This insures that the same help that they received will be available to others who are new to the fellowship.

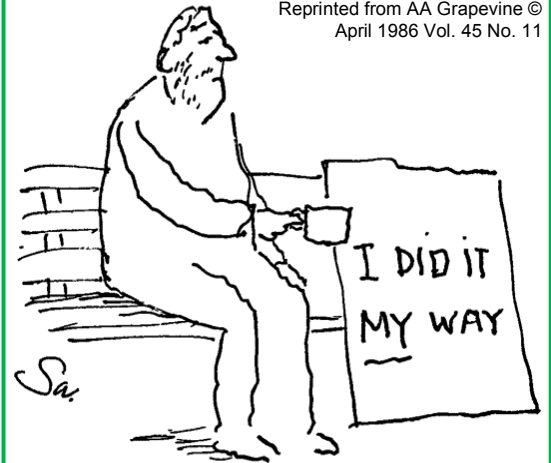
Start today. It is not how much you give that's important. It's thinking of others on your special day, that makes it so special. This is a wonderful way to express your gratitude by helping others receive the blessings of sobriety.

Group Contributions and individual contributions are the life support of Alcoholic Anonymous. There is no such thing as a small contribution.

Make checks payable to:

Broward County Intergroup, Inc.
305 S. Andrews Ave., Suite 502,
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301

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April 1986 Vol. 45 No. 11



Word Scramble Tradition Four

1. tiarlen _____
2. fleatiafi _____
3. noovteiaslonncrr _____
4. steerdsisn _____
5. dealyal _____
6. grimnaws _____
7. surlyoesi _____
8. gleorusanti _____
9. packsteli _____
10. rmptrooe _____

(answers on page 6)

BCIC Broward County Institutions Committee

Next Meeting: April 11th
10:00 a.m. at the Twelve Step House,
205 SW 23rd St., Ft. Lauderdale.

Intergroup Meetings

will be now held at

The Twelve Step House,
205 S.W. 23rd, Ft. Lauderdale,
at 1:00 p.m.

Steering Committee meets at 11:30 a.m.

Upcoming Meetings

April 19th — May 17th

Continued from Page 4

This is quite different from my old method of just trying to erase the disturbing feeling by drinking. That is like reacting to a flashing oil light on a dashboard by grabbing a hammer and bashing it.

Getting comfortable with reality has a lot to do with understanding myself. For me this has mostly be a process of going to a lot of meetings to see myself reflected in others. As they opened up about themselves, I could often identify and open up about myself, finding what was really there.

I recall a guy on a tape saying that he didn't feel all that different from the guy that got to AA to stop drinking, but the rest of the world seemed to get much more beautiful, unthreatening and populated by nice folks. This seems to have a lot to do with becoming less self-centered and living a good and sober life, no longer dwelling on and amongst the unpleasant parts of life.

I know that there are those who feel that the only insanity we need be concerned with is the insane thinking that might tell me that I could drink again. There seem to be many in AA for whom this is true, perhaps the same members who find feel that they are happily sober going to the occasional meeting and without the need to work Steps or have a Higher Power in their life. I am not one of those and do not envy them because I enjoy doing what I have found I need to do to maintain contented sobriety. I used to wonder if contentment was a valid goal as it seemed to be related to complacency.

The way I see it now is that there is nothing wrong with being content with a life spent rowing up the river of recovery. But I have to avoid getting content with where I am on the river and thinking that I can stay in that part of the river even if I stop rowing.

—Jim, Tasmania—

Grapevine Online Exclusive

BROWARD COUNTY INTERGROUP

Invites you to our

52nd Annual Intergroup Appreciation Dinner

Saturday, April 25th, 2015

6:00 pm to 11:00 pm

TROPICAL ACRES RESTAURANT

2500 Griffin Road

Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33312

An Evening of appreciation for our Intergroup volunteers & staff

Coffee Hour – 6:00 p.m., Dinner – 7:00 p.m.

Introduction & Speaker – 8:00 p.m.

**Advance ticket purchase offers pre-selection of
chicken, beef or vegetarian for \$40.00 p/p.**

Tickets are all sold in advance, they will not be sold at the door.

All proceeds support your Broward County Intergroup Office.

For more information call:

Intergroup Office 954-462-0265 or

Banquet Chair 954-255-9138 Jean G.

Definition of Broward County Intergroup, Inc.

Your Intergroup office services all groups in the Broward County area. It is not a governing body and does not attempt to, nor can it, rule any AA Group. Its sole purpose is to act as a clearinghouse for the convenience of members and groups desiring assistance, and to extend the Twelve Step Work "carrying the message" to the sick alcoholic. The Intergroup office is supported entirely by contributions from groups, usually a specified amount each month or at intervals throughout the year.

Faithful Fivers are fellow A.A. members who donate five dollars (\$5) a month to Intergroup as an act of gratitude. Their generosity helps us to carry the message of A.A. to the still sick and suffering alcoholic throughout the year.

Thank you to our Faithful Fivers. Your contributions are so appreciated!

Tom & Liz J., Gregory C., Sherri D., Suzanne B., June C., Ron J. Bob H., Anonymous I, Bobby V., Janet M., Dan C., Elizabeth B., Happiness Is Group, Lillian M., Fran C., Milinda B., Barbara S., Lois O., Richard H., Gay M., Richard S., Sam B., Mark S. Howard S., Douglas C., Jennifer S., the other Bob H., Carol B., the original Bob H., Leslie R.

and maybe YOU next time?

Please consider becoming a "Faithful Fiver." Your commitment of \$5.00 a month to your Intergroup Office will go a long way toward helping carry the message to the still sick and suffering alcoholic who reaches out.

Fill out this form and mail it in with your contribution today!

It is the still suffering alcoholic who ultimately benefits from your generous spirit!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Sobriety Date and Home Group _____

Make checks payable to:

Broward County Intergroup, Inc.

305 S. Andrews Ave., Suite 502, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301

Answers from page 5:

1. reliant
2. affiliate
3. noncontroversial
4. dissenters
5. allayed
6. swarming
7. seriously
8. regulations
9. skeptical
10. promoter

Groups we need your help!

We are looking for groups that would like to contribute a gift basket to be raffled off at our

**52nd Annual
Volunteer Appreciation Dinner
April 25th**

Tropical Acres Restaurant
2500 Griffin Road, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
For information contact: 954-462-0265

Room 502 is a monthly publication of Broward County Intergroup, Inc. (BCI).

The opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of BCI or AA as a whole.

We welcome your stories, news and comments. The deadline for submission is the 15th of each month.

Material may be edited for space and content and cannot be returned.

Please send your submissions to will@aabroward.org or help@aabroward.org.

MEETING CHANGES

Monday

Lighthouse Point Trinity, 6:30 p.m., Will no longer meet Thursdays., and has moved to Dixon Ahl Hall, 2200 NE 38th Street, Pompano 33064.

NEW MEETING Along Spiritual Lines, St. Francis Mission, 208 SE 8 St, FtL 33301, Mon. 7:30 p.m. OBBSS Monday Night at the Fourth Dimension in Hollywood 7 p.m. is now a Men's CD, **Monday Night Men's**

Tuesday

NEW MEETING Keep it In the Day, Temple Beth Emet, 4807 S. Flamingo Rd., Cooper City, Tues. 6 p.m., CSP

NEW MEETING By the Book Beginners Group, 7:30p.m., Unity, 1501 NE 26th St, Wilton Manors OBG

Wednesday

NEW MEETING Young and Free, 8:45 p.m. 12 Step House, 205 SW 23rd St., Fort Lauderdale, 33315. OCC.

Oakland Park Big Book Step Study, 7:30 p.m. 4312 N.E. 5th Avenue, Oakland Park. **No longer meets.**

Thursday

NEW MEETING Our Charge, Luther Memorial Lutheran 1925 N. SR 7, Hollywood, Thurs. 8:30 p.m., CD

Thursday Night Study Group, 7:30 p.m., Sunrise, has moved to Unity, 1501 NE 26th St, Wilton Manors OBB

Friday

NEW MEETING Coffee Pot Group, 8:00 p.m. Pro-Am Building, 1915 NE 45th St., (Florinada) Ft. Lauderdale.

NEW MEETING AA Late Night, 10 p.m. Faith Christian Church, 7676 Davie Rd. Ext. @ 77th Ave., Davie, 33024

NEW MEETING Women's Hope in Recovery, First Presby, 2331 NE 26 Ave., Pompano, CSTw 11-st Meditation.

Central Fact Group, 7:30 p.m. Deerfield, has moved to St. Ambrose Church, 380 S. Federal Hwy. Deerfield 33441

Saturday

NEW MEETING Our Lives on the Line, 7:00 p.m., OD. Meets at 721 E. Atlantic Blvd., Pompano.

Zion on the Beach Life Guard Station 8, Deerfield Beach. **No longer meets.**

To Stay Alive Saturday Night, 8:00 p.m., Share unit. **Will be moving May 2nd** to St. Boniface Catholic Church, Ministry Building, Room 6, 8330 Johnson St., Pembroke Pines, 33024 OD

Sunday

Sunrise Beginners, 9:30 a.m. Sunrise, has moved to Sun Village Plaza, 4577 N. University Dr. Lauderhill 33351

Sunday Morning Pembroke Park, 9:00 a.m. Hallandale, has moved to Mary Saunders Park, 4750 SW 21st Street, Hallandale 33023. And changed their name to **West Park Sunday Morning Group**.

Daily

Dania After Work Group, 5:30 p.m., has moved to St. Maurice Catholic Church, 441 NE 2nd St. Dania 33004.

Upcoming Events

- April 10-12** Florida Area 15 Quarterly, District 10, Boca Raton, Hosted by District 8. Boca Raton Marriott at Boca Center, 5150 Town Center Circle, Boca Raton, FL 33486. Friday 4:00p.m.-8:30p.m., Saturday 8:00a.m.-8:30p.m., Sunday 7:00a.m.-9:00a.m.
- April 12** **Annual Victor E Picnic**, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Snyder Park, 3299 SW 4th St., Pavilion 1, Ft. Lauderdale. Fun, food, recovery, music, raffles, and two speakers. This is a free event (parking \$1.00/hour, \$5.00 max.). No pets please!
- April 18** **District 9 Archives Old Timers Meeting**, Dessert, 3 speakers with 35+ years sobriety, full archives display, NSU, 3200 University Drive, Davie. Free. Bring a newcomer and a dessert. For info archives@district9aa.org.
- April 25** **52nd Annual Intergroup Appreciation Banquet**, Tropical Acres Steak House, 2500 Griffin Rd., Ft. Lauderdale. 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Dinner, Speaker meeting, Raffles \$40.00. Save the date! Tickets available now. Advance sales only.
- May 7-10** **37th Big Book Seminar**, Embassy Suites Fort Lauderdale, 1100 SE 17th Street, Ft. Lauderdale. Registration \$25.00. For more info visit, www.bigbookseminar.org.
- May 20** **49th Annual Ft. Lauderdale Men's Anniversary Dinner**, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 1750 E. Oakland Park Blvd. Ft. Lauderdale. 6:30p.m. Meeting, Dinner following . Ladies are invited for this occasion.