

Suite 404

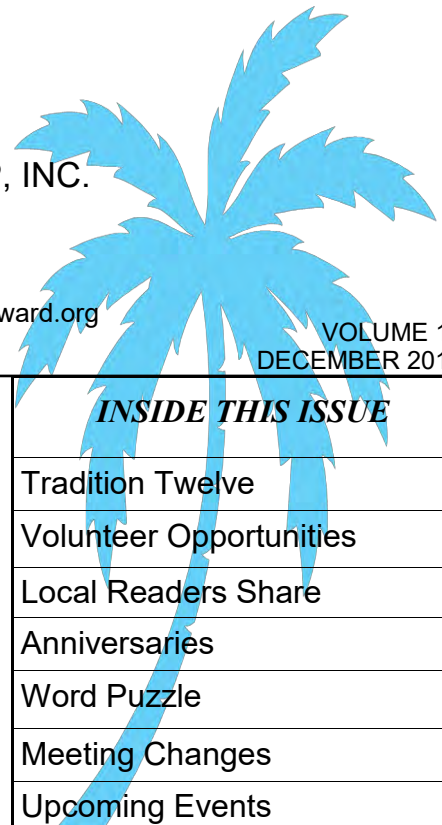
BROWARD COUNTY INTERGROUP, INC.

Oakland Commerce Center

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VOLUME 12
DECEMBER 2017

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.”

Our Greatest Christmas Gift

How better can we thank God for our sobriety than by bringing the light and hope of AA to others

THIS is the time of year when people everywhere pause in their headlong rush through life to relax for a short time, and be friendly with each other; a time when old acquaintances are renewed, families once again drawn close together, in spirit, if not in person. It is a time when old feelings of bitterness are pushed aside, enmities forgotten, and a spirit of good feeling allowed to enter into our hearts. It is a time when our own problems are forgotten, and we search our hearts for a way to bring gladness to those less fortunate than us.

To many of us this will be our first sober Christmas in many years. To some it will be a time to look back on several years of sobriety. To all, it will be a time for reflection, and a time to be thankful. Many, many Christmases before were somewhat less than happy times. As alcoholics we have all known these times. Years have been wasted, homes broken, and chances for happiness destroyed by our addiction to alcohol. But today we are sober. Today we can help someone. Today we can be useful in some way; some little way which perhaps may not seem like much, but when all the little ways of being helpful are added together some day, there is a chance they will do much to balance the books. . . a chance that though much of our lives were spent in hopeless despair, some good may come of them yet.

For all of us in AA, there is a way in which we can bring the happiness of Christmas to many families, not just at this time of the year, but every day, through all the remaining years of our lives. For each of the many million drinking alcoholics in this country today, at least a dozen other lives are affected. For each of these same alcoholics, given an opportunity to live the AA way of life, perhaps a hundred other lives can be affected for the better, rather than the worse. This is not just a wild dream, this is true. You cannot live in accordance with the AA principles, and fail to bring about some change in the lives of all those around you.

The gift of sobriety that we have been given is the greatest gift of all. There are so many who do not yet know of our way of life. We can be of great help to these people, and to ourselves, and to the God of our understanding, by passing this gift on to those who are still caught in the trap of alcoholism.

When we think back over our lives how much can we honestly find to warrant the good that has been given to us so freely as

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Concept XII

The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

Tradition Twelve - "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, always reminding us to place principles before personalities."

(Continued from Page 1)

members of AA? Can we honestly believe that we are deserving of the many blessings which have been bestowed on us? Are we being rewarded so richly for the years we spent causing suffering, unhappiness and anguish in our own lives and the lives of every one associated with us? Certainly not. Why, then, are we sober and happy today? Why have we been shown a way to a life of peace and contentment? Why were we spared. . . we who were considered the outcasts of the world? What good could we ever possibly be to God, to ourselves, or to anyone?

We can find the answer very simply. Think for a moment of the whys and wherefores of our lives and there can be but one answer. We have suffered, yes. We have known misery and remorse and all the sordid results of alcoholism. Why? There is always a reason for what happens in our lives. We in AA have been lifted out of the gutter and transplanted into a completely new and different life. Why? Can it be because God wants us to pass this same life on to others who are still suffering the ravages of alcoholism? There can be no other answer.

Let us, therefore, continue to band together, we who alone are so weak, but together can be so strong. Let us continue to carry our message. . . let us try always to bring our light of hope into the darkness of the still suffering alcoholic's life. Let us share our gifts with the many who have yet to discover that there is a way out, and by so doing we can help keep the *Christmas spirit* prevalent all year long.

-- Bill O., Charleston, South Carolina

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Read All About It

A death of a fellow member reminds one man why anonymity is so important

A short while ago a member of our Fellowship was killed. Two days later there was a headline in the local paper: "Daughter charged in mother's slaying."

The story described the daughter as having a history of psychological problems, and said there had been violent episodes before. The reporter described neighbors gathering in front of the victim's house, leaving flowers and notes as a memorial on her porch. Some of those gathered identified themselves to the reporter as members of her AA group. They said she had been sober for a year or two and was doing well. They declined to give their own names.

Reading this I wondered if the members of her group had protected her anonymity while she yet lived. And if so, why were they so ready to break it as soon as she died? A quick internet search revealed that a number of other media outlets had picked up this story with its AA connection. One blogger opined that it was not safe to attend AA, because AA members frequently contradicted the advice of healthcare professionals and advised members not to take their prescribed medications. This writer actually suggested that AA might be complicit in the murder.

For the last 25 years, I have been speaking at DUI classes on behalf of our Public Information committee. We try to provide straightforward information to people who have been convicted of driving under the influence. I usually describe our Tradition of anonymity to them by saying, "We will respect your confidentiality, and we expect you to respect ours." This incident, though, has made me wonder if I've been making empty promises. If each of us does not take personal responsibility for protecting other members' anonymity, I fear we will all lose something of great value.

—Anonymous



Local Readers Share.....

*It's hard for me to name a piece of AA Literature or a specific passage that I like, because I don't have the book memorized. I am, though, quite fond of the slogans—Live and Let Live is a good one and One Day at a Time. But, my favorite of all slogans is **This Too Shall Pass**. The longer I stayed sober the more meaning it had for me, because I had experienced it time and time again. Whether we are going through the hardest times or the best of times, they always pass. Life is cyclical and the longer we stick around and learn to live life on life's terms, the more we can appreciate that slogan and all it's truth.*

— Ernie F., Ft. Lauderdale

ATTENTION HOLIDAY SHOPPERS



YOUR INTERGROUP OFFICE IS FULLY STOCKED TO HANDLE ALL YOUR
HOLIDAY SHOPPING NEEDS FOR ALL THOSE
FAVORITE PEOPLE IN YOUR SUPPORT GROUP.
WHETHER YOU ARE SHOPPING FOR BOOKS OR GIFT ITEMS,
WE OFFER MOST THINGS BELOW RETAIL PRICES.
PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR INTERGROUP

Volunteer opportunities

Planning for the 7th Annual AA'S GOT TALENT! (Show to be held February 3, 2018)

Volunteers still needed— please come and get signed-up

NEXT MEETING is December 16 at 1:30 PM ~ 441 Group in Margate

The Next Planning meeting for the

55th Annual Intergroup Appreciation Banquet will be held at the

Intergroup office, Tuesday, January 9th at 6:00 PM

2018 Florida State Convention at FORT LAUDERDALE BEACH

Next Planning Meeting (after holidays) is Saturday, January 21 at 9 AM
Broward County Water & WWTF, 2555 W Copans Rd., Bldg. #2, Pompano Beach

SERVICE KEEPS YOU SOBER *Pick up a commitment today!!*



Step 12— 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.

The words, "Having had a spiritual Awakening," spoke about something that I never imagined would ever happen to me. Oh sure, I was raised as a Christian, going to Catholic school, singing in the choir, and going to church every Sunday, but religion alone does not necessarily make a person spiritual. In fact, many spiritual people have no religious belief at all.

When I first came into AA, I was spiritually bankrupt. I had recently completed a 28-day rehab in New Jersey. My counselor called me into her office on my last day. She encouraged me to get to an AA meeting as soon as I got home, and to get a sponsor. She was extremely concerned that I was returning to my family's business as a full-time bartender and manager, and knew that I would need as much support as I could get to maintain my sobriety.

Upon returning to work, I thought that I had my newfound sobriety under control. I felt that I could do this on my own, and remained reluctant to attend any AA meetings. After all, how were a bunch of alcoholics in a room, going to help me stay sober. After a few weeks, it was getting more and more difficult for me to stay sober. I called a friend, who I knew went to meetings, to ask her if she would take me to a meeting. That phone call was one of the most difficult things that I had to do. I came to realize that my reluctance to go, was not because my ego was telling me that I could do this on my own, but rather because I was extremely fearful of going to a meeting in a roomful of strangers who could probably see through me better than I could see through myself.

During that first meeting, I received an amazing amount of support from the people in the room. Listening to the speaker share his story, and the feedback from the members in the group, was very encouraging to me. I continued to return to the meetings, but did not share for a long time. I was still very fearful that I might not sound eloquent or knowledgeable enough on recovery, to contribute positively to the meeting. I wanted everyone to think highly of me. Eventually, I did start to share, and always felt better after I did. Again, my fear had been preventing me from, not only helping myself, but of helping other people, as well. This is all part of the 12th step. Helping other people. Every time a person shares their experience, strength and hope, or welcomes a newcomer into the rooms, offers someone support, or does service in the meeting, they are all working the 12th step.

My Wednesday night meeting was the largest meeting that I attended. It was in a hospital where there were over 100 participants at the meeting. They would bring down patients from the detox. On this one Wednesday night, someone came up to me and told me that he had been seeing me in the meeting quite a lot lately, and was wondering if I would be the speaker tonight, since their scheduled speaker didn't show. I told him no, that I couldn't do it. He asked the person next to me, who said yes. I don't think that I ever listened to a speaker so intently, as I did that night. I kept asking myself, what is this person saying, that I couldn't say. I was very upset with myself, and during the break, I found the person who asked me, and apologized to him. I told him that one thing that I had always heard, was that you never say no to AA. We spoke, and he eventually became my sponsor. A few months later, I did speak at that meeting, and it was an amazing experience. We would also volunteer to visit and talk to the patients in the detox. Speaking with the patients helped me to understand how much more I am helped, when I help another suffering alcoholic.

During the course of working the 12 steps with my sponsor, I did experience that spiritual awakening that people talk about. For myself, it was not enough to just read the steps, I had to do the work for that to happen. Even as a bartender, I was working the 12th step. Our bar was like the television show, "Cheers," where everyone knows everyone by name. I had eventually let some of my good regular customers know that I was sober, and that I was in the AA program. I will say that there were more customers curious about the meetings and staying sober, than there were actual customers who tried it out. One of my customers, who was also a dear friend of mine, called me at home one night, crying on the phone, asking me to take her to a meeting. I am happy to say that she is still sober today. I had another customer who I eventually sponsored, and he is still sober today. He came home to celebrate his 20th year of sobriety, and we went to one of the meetings that he began to attend when he first got sober. Unfortunately, not everyone can be helped. I had another customer who came to me for help. She came with me to some meetings, and appeared to be doing well. I was extremely happy for her. She got a sponsor, and was putting in the work. However, one day, I was told that she died from an overdose. I was devastated. I felt so bad. My sponsor reminded me that we cannot control other people. People relapse, and we cannot be discouraged. We must move on and help the next person.

In the 12-step prayer, it says, "Dear God, having had a spiritual awakening, I must now remember that faith without works is dead. And Practical Experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. So, God, please help me to carry this message to other alcoholics. Provide me with the guidance and wisdom to talk with another alcoholic because I can help when no one else can. Help me secure his confidence and remember he is ill.

— Mike, New Jersey

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A.A. Birthdays

December Celebrants

Broward Men's

Corey ~ 14 yrs.
Eric L. ~ 14 yrs.
John B. ~ 42 yrs.

Mountain Group

Mark J. ~ 20 yrs.

Lunch Bunch

Allen ~ 24 yrs.
Nancy ~ 28 yrs.
Jim ~ 30 yrs.

YANA Group

Sarah N. ~ 21 yrs.
Paul W. ~ 13 yrs.

Free and Easy

Helen O. ~ 33 yrs.

Sunlight of the Spirit

Tom J. ~ 29 yrs.

One Day at a Time

Ernie B. ~ 31 yrs.
Gay M. ~ 28 yrs.

Davie Women's

Suzanne J. ~ 12 yrs.



**DOES YOUR GROUP
HAVE A LIST OF
MEMBERS'
ANNIVERSARIES?
SHARE IT WITH US, SO
WE CAN HELP YOU
CELEBRATE DURING
YOUR SPECIAL MONTH!**

JOIN THE BIRTHDAY CLUB!

Celebrate your sobriety by sending \$1 per every year sober to your local Intergroup office to show your gratitude and give back once a year. *(Birthday listings are not contingent upon contributions...we just like to celebrate sobriety.)*

BCIC - Broward County Institutions Committee

Next Meeting:
December 9th at 10:00 AM

Twelve Step House
205 SW 23rd Street
Ft. Lauderdale.

**Next
Intergroup Meeting
Twelve Step House
205 S.W. 23rd, Ft. Lauderdale
December 17
at 1:00 p.m.**

November Celebrants - not previously mentioned



Perry Street South

Trudy ~ 26 yrs.

Easier Softer Way

Eddie G. ~ 35 yrs.

Tamarac Group

Gary L. ~ 20 yrs.
Donna L. ~ 20 yrs.
Jamie M. ~ 23 yrs.

No. Lauderdale Back to Basics

John S. ~ 17 yrs.

Other Notables

Maryann J. ~ 17 yrs.

Express Group

Larry C.

New Life Group

Ed ~ 23 yrs.

Broward Men's

Henry ~ 1 yr.
Leon ~ 10 yrs.

Vet's in Recovery

Joe K. ~ 21 yrs.

Pompano Beach Grp

Donna S. ~ 31 yrs.



Recovery Word Puzzle

*Unscramble the letters. Answers to puzzle can be found on page 7.
Words for this puzzle have been used somewhere else in this edition of Suite 404.*

SAMYBLES

TRAPCOPENAII

VERTOOSYRCN

ROSPLUIE

PIGSPHON

FAQDINEULUI

SPRILENCPI

SKETCIT

LABSTUNTSIA

SMARTHISC

TOONDAFNUI

MEETTININC

Making Myself Anonymous - ONE AMONG MANY

Tradition Twelve seems like a Step to me. It's so spiritual in its focus on anonymity. Someone said it well: "What is shared in meetings is more important than who said it."

The hard part for me is to remember that I, too, am a personality. When I start thinking that what I share is really important, that people really need to hear me ... well, I've put my own personality before the very principles I am attempting to convey. I start to think of myself as being uniquely capable of transmitting the message of recovery from alcoholism. Suddenly, I am the person everyone needs to hear!

Sure. How boring. Yet, predictable. As a lifelong know-it-all, people-pleaser, caretaker, mind-reader, problem-fixer, and control freak, I am incredibly susceptible to believing my own propaganda. Of course, pretty soon someone lets me know that I am really very dispensable, and my input or advice isn't needed, thank you very much. When I go to meetings, I am reminded that I am one among many. This is truly a "we" program.

Other people's recovery doesn't depend solely on me. There are so many terrific people in the program who can help other alcoholics, including me.

-- Julie E., Maplewood, New Jersey

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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.

The office purchases and sells all conference-approved books and literature to groups throughout Broward County.

Faithful Fivers are 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 J., Bob H., Anonymous I, Elizabeth B., Lillian M., Ron J., Tim S., Milinda B., Barbara S., Lois O., Richard H., Jennifer S., Ted K., June C., Pat R., Beth D., Trent A., Thomas T., Thomas Q., Craig G., Sandy P., Mel K., Leo H., Larry C., Jean G., Vickie T., Howie K., Kerry W., Lewis G., James B., James H., Joanne D., Jim R., Kevin B., Gerry B., Don W., Jamie B., Flemming A., Arthur R., Eric P., Tara D., Nancy S., Joey B., Denise J., Howard S., Bob D., Arielle V. and Bonnie T.

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!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Sobriety Date and Home Group _____

Make checks payable to:

Broward County Intergroup, Inc., 3317 NW 10th Terrace, Suite 404, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309

ANSWERS TO PUZZLE from page 6: assembly, controversy, shopping, principles, substantial, foundation, appreciation, perilous, unqualified, tickets, Christmas, incitement

Suite 404 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.**

Twelve Tips for a Sober, Joyous Holiday Season

Holiday parties without alcohol may still be a dreary prospect for new A.A.s, but many of us have enjoyed the happiest holidays of our lives sober. Here are some tips:

1. Line up extra A.A. activities — meetings, speaking, phone answering.
2. Entertain A.A. friends, especially newcomers.
3. Keep A.A. phone numbers with you at all times—and USE THEM!
4. Find out about special holiday parties, meetings, or other events at groups in your area, and go. If you're shy, take a newer member.
5. Skip drinking occasions you're nervous about. Remember your drinking talent for making excuses? Put it to work for you in sobriety.
6. If you must attend a drinking party, and can't find a fellow A.A. to come with you, keep some candy handy.
7. You don't have to stay late. Plan for an "important date."
8. Go to church. Any Church.
9. Don't sit around brooding. Catch up on reading, letters, walks.
10. Remember, one day at a time. Don't start now to worry about all those "holiday temptations."
11. If you can't give material gifts this year, you can give love.
12. "Having had a ..." You already know the Twelfth Step!

MEETING CHANGES

Monday

#Sober Moms has a new name and time. MOMMY and ME now meets at 6:30 PM at the Christ Community Church in Pompano. This group provides childcare during the meeting through a rotation of members.

Tuesday

Joy of Sobriety has relocated to the Sanctuary. Meeting time is still 8:30 PM at 1400 N Federal Hwy, FTL.

NEW MEETING Shoulder to Shoulder, The Sanctuary, 1400 N Federal Hwy., Ft. Lauderdale at 1 PM. OLTD

Wednesday

B.Y.O.B. which met in Hallandale at the Cultural Center NO LONGER MEETS.

Primary Purpose BB Study has moved from the Lutheran Church in Hollywood to the West Broward Club. Time and format remain the same.

Thursday

The Turning Point which met in Hallandale has moved to Hollywood. It now meets at the Hollywood Beach Cultural and Community Center, 1301 S Ocean Drive and is now an Open meeting. Still meets at 9:30 AM—OSP

NEW MEETING Shoulder to Shoulder, The Sanctuary, 1400 N Federal Hwy., Ft. Lauderdale at 1 PM. OLTD

Friday

NEW MEETING B.S. Group meeting at the 101 Club, 700 SW 10 St. and Dixie in Pompano at 8:15 PM. OLT

Discussion Tables moved from Plantation to the West Broward Club, 5625 S University Dr., Davie. 7 PM. OD

NEW MEETING Spiritually Based Solution Blue Water Recovery, 521 SW 2 Place, Pompano at 7:30 PM. OSP

Saturday

Saturday Night Sobriety which met at Kiwanis Park in Coral Springs NO LONGER MEETS.

The Harbor Group has added a day. Sober Today Club in Hollywood 8:30 PM. OBB

NEW MEETING We Rise meets at Fellowship Recovery Center, 5400 Atlantic Blvd., Margate at 9 AM. OCCg

Sunday

NEW MEETING Russian Speaking Alcoholics of S.Florida now meets at the Twelve Step House at 7 PM. 203 SW 23rd Street, Fort Lauderdale. All Russian Speakers welcome. CBB.

NEW MEETING 11th Step Beach Meeting meets at North Ocean Park in Pompano at 14th Street on the beach at 7 PM. OSTD

Daily

South Florida Group has found a new permanent home again. The new address is 5722 Washington St. (just east of 441) in Hollywood. They meet 7 days a week at Noon and 10 PM (CD) and M—F at 5:30 PM (CD). They also meet 7 days a week at 8 PM (RF). All meetings are Closed except Friday at 8 PM.



**ALL HOLIDAY INTERGROUP SHOPPERS WHO SPEND AT LEAST
\$30 ON AN INDIVIDUAL PURCHASE, FROM NOW THROUGH CHRISTMAS,
WILL ALSO RECEIVE ONE FREE BIG BOOK!!**

Happy Holidays to All from Us at Intergroup!

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Dec. 2 | Winterfest Dinner & Ice Cream Social presented by District 9 SYS . NSU, 3200 S University Drive, Davie. Dinner 6 PM, Meeting 8 PM. \$8 in advance, \$10 at door. |
| Jan. 5-7 | S. Florida Area 15 Quarterly Assembly Hyatt Regency Sarasota, Free Service Event |
| Feb. 3 | 7th Annual AA's Got Talent Show Adult only event begins at 6 PM. Coral Springs Charter School, 3205 N University Drive, Coral Springs. \$12 limited seating. Entertainment, coffee and desserts. |
| Mar. 4 | Spring Fling Festival hosted by District 9. NSU, Terry Bldg., 3200 S. University, Davie. 6 PM |
| Apr. 28 | 55th Annual Intergroup Appreciation Dinner , Tropical Acres, Griffin Rd., Davie, 6 PM, Dinner, Raffles, 2 Speakers, 4-course meal \$40. Tickets only sold in advance. Limited seating. |