



Suite 404

BROWARD COUNTY INTERGROUP, INC.
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VOLUME 1
JANUARY 2019

Step One - "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable."

Me Against the World

I took my last thirteen shots of vodka on the day before I entered my local VA hospital for alcoholic hepatitis, due to not eating enough while drinking. Once my liver was fixed up, I figured I'd take better care of myself and eat a little (while drinking).

Well, they checked me in, and I weighed 117 pounds on a five-foot-eleven frame. The doctor complimented me on my fine teeth. I joked, hammed it up for the nurses, trying to show how nonchalant I was. Inside, I was terrified. I knew they didn't serve alcohol in the VA.

After spending a day on a medical-surgical floor, I was indignant when the doctor said, "Send him up to the psychiatric floor. Let them detox him." My Silver Star, Bronze Star, and two Purple Hearts didn't seem to impress them much as they took me upstairs to the tenth floor. You see, I'd always thought of myself as a little weird but not crazy. Besides, wasn't I a hero, a combat veteran? Sure, I'd drunk a little more than I should have, but I was entitled. The nightmares, the night sweats, the startle reflex at any loud noise--that's why I drank. Couldn't they see that an ungrateful country which chose to ignore me and other Vietnam vets was responsible for my excess drinking? Surely, the VA would be sympathetic, they would understand. They understood, all right!

After a month with no alcohol in the detox-acute psychiatric ward, I saw other vets--vets from World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. I noticed there were two types of vets up there. Those who were discharged from the hospital sober, and in a week or two returned to be readmitted drunk, and those who were discharged from the hospital, period. There was a vet with "wet brain," another going through DTs, and still another screaming all night in the isolation room for his mother to hold him. That was me. The fact that she died three months after my return from Vietnam was a reason to drink. It was me, alone, against a loused-up world. Sound familiar?

After spending eighty-nine days on the psychiatric ward, I was discharged from the hospital. I remember the nurse saying, "Your best chance of staying sober is after your first hospitalization for alcoholism." The only thing was, I didn't think I was an alcoholic. I'd gotten one hundred percent on the questionnaire about my drinking habits: yes, I drank alone; yes, I drank in the morning; yes, I drank every day for over five years. But I still had a house, money in the bank, and my dog. I didn't need to learn how to feed myself like they were teaching the guys up on the ward. I had a master's degree in English literature and had taught for eight years. Okay, I was on a temporary medical leave of absence; sure, my wife had left me, but I divorced her. The doctors said I was suffering from an anxiety disorder and post-traumatic stress

(continued on page 4)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Tradition One	2
Volunteer Opportunities	3
Word Scramble	3
Anniversaries	5
Things We Cannot...	5
Meeting Changes	8
Upcoming Events	8

**AA'S GOT TALENT
TICKETS ON SALE
NOW!**

\$10 EACH

**DON'T MISS THIS VERY
ENTERTAINING EVENT!**

**CALL INTERGROUP AND
PAY BY CREDIT CARD**

Intergroup Fundraiser

Concept I

**Final responsibility
and ultimate
authority for A.A.
world services
should always reside
in the collective
conscience of our
whole Fellowship.**

Tradition One - "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity."

Tolerance: A two-way street

The First Tradition has been called our unity statement. Unity is imperative if AA will survive for the next suffering alcoholic who comes through the door. But too often the word "unity" is misunderstood. Often we interpret it as "coming together in a common place"; or, "superficial friendliness and jovial glad-handing"; or even, "public displays of affection (such as hugging)." In truth, while such public expressions may accompany unity, it goes much deeper than these surface levels.

Yes, we share a common malady--our alcoholism--but anyone who has ever frequented the bar life can tell you that commonality in our illness alone produces little unity.

The Big Book says, "Love and tolerance of others is our code." In truth, this is the basis of real unity. Genuine love can come only from the source of love, which we call our Higher Power; tolerance, in turn, is the expression of this love toward our fellows. Tolerance is easy to practice toward those of our fellows with whom we share more than one commonality. For example, it's natural to tolerate people with whom we share a socio-economic status, interests and hobbies, education or (perceived) intellectual level; but what about those of divergent religious, political, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds? Can we be tolerant of them as well?

Since its beginning, AA has tried to foster a climate of acceptance of everyone who has a desire to stop drinking, regardless of background. The short form of our Third Tradition reminds us: "The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking." In its zeal to accomplish this end, it even added the words "as we understood him" to the word "God" in the Third Step, allowing each person to choose his own conception of God in the hope that this word need be a barrier to none who wish to practice our program of recovery. Thereafter, Christians, Jews, Moslems, Buddhists, Hindus, even agnostics and atheists--at last permitted to seek their own conception of a Higher Power--were able to find recovery from our common illness. This tolerance was key to AA's success and survival.

But tolerance is a two-way street. Living in the Ozarks (firmly located in "The Bible Belt"), I experience frequent examples of low-key "evangelizing" in my AA meetings. This is a subtle form of intolerance that is usually tolerated by other members so long as it doesn't get too far over the line. But occasionally, newcomers, who are not yet aware of the bounds of religious decorum in meetings, do cross that nebulous line, angering those of an agnostic tendency. I recently found myself in just such a meeting.

A young newcomer, returning from morning mass still attired in his white shirt and tie, attended the 10 A.M. meeting of my home group. The meeting included a young lady--also a newcomer, who declares herself an avowed atheist--and an older man who refers to himself as a Wiccan. As the meeting progressed, an elderly old-timer boldly declared his faith in Jesus Christ. Feeling thus emboldened by the comments of the old-timer, the young male newcomer then whipped out a pocket Bible and proceeded to read. As if on the sound of "charge," half the group bolted upright and stormed from the meeting, leaving the young man puzzled. I myself felt embarrassed and ashamed.

After the meeting, I approached the young Bible-reader. I told him that I, myself, though not a churchgoer, am also a Bible-reader. However, I said, such readings are not appropriate in an AA meeting, where members of various beliefs attend. I also suggested to the old-timer that perhaps he should go easy on the "J.C." talk. When the Wiccan asserted himself, I also reminded him that Wicca is a religion and not to be promoted in AA.

(continued on page 4)

*Happy
New Year*



Recovery Word Puzzle

RINEGITNENAT
HISTARPICCY
STEPTHIAI
TEAMTULI
VINETERDG
COREALENT



REMOCUD
REELSHARA
RIFALAMI
GOITNINI
MYOFTRICNO
DARTNEDUN

Unscramble the letters. Answers to puzzle can be found on page 7.

56TH ANNUAL INTERGROUP APPRECIATION BANQUET

Tickets on sale now

\$45 each (prime rib dinner)

Reserve a table for \$450

Intergroup sends many thanks to our outgoing Chair, Howie K. for his years of service and wisdom, and also, to our friend Jamie B. who served as Audit & Finance Chair for 3 years. Thanks so much for your service and expertise.

Volunteer Opportunities

8th Annual AA's GOT TALENT last planning meeting is
at the 441 Group, 1452 N. State Rd. 7, Margate on
Saturday, January 19 at 1:30 PM.

Walk-through Rehearsal is January 26th

2019 INTERGROUP APPRECIATION BANQUET next planning meeting
Intergroup Office, 3317 NW 10 Terrace, Suite 404, Ft Lauderdale
Tuesday, January 29th at 6 PM

District 9 SYS SPRING FLING will be having planning meetings on
Wednesday, Jan. 16th at Denny's, 3151 NW 9th Ave., Ft. Lauderdale—**7 PM** and
Wednesday, Jan. 30th at Skyline Chili, 2834 N. University Drive, Sunrise—**7 PM**

Pick up a commitment today!!

SERVICE KEEPS YOU SOBER



(Continued from page 1)

disorder from seeing too much combat. They used to call it shell shock or battle fatigue. I wasn't going to take their advice about taking my medication and attending AA meetings. AA was for skid-row deadbeats, and I was a war hero. I'd do it like I did everything in life--alone, with no help from anybody.

I got into my eleven-year-old car, my hand still shaking as I put the key in the ignition. I was free. The engine turned over after three tries and off I drove. The eighty-nine days in the psychiatric ward were worse than combat, worse than 'Nam, worse than anything I'd ever experienced. I wouldn't make the same mistake again.

I was stopped at a red light, about two blocks from the hospital, when I saw it: PAPA'S BAR AND GRILL. Suddenly, the car stalled. The car behind me began honking. I felt trapped in the car. "A drink, I need a drink." With that thought, I knew I was licked before I started. In my desperation, I asked God to take my life right then and there. I couldn't win this battle and I wasn't going back to the terror and captivity of the psychiatric ward. I didn't want to drink anymore but seemed powerless to stop. For the first time in my life, I knew I was beaten. My will and determination were useless. "God, I quit. You heal me if you want but I quit," I said in desperation. "If you want me sober then you start this car." I looked anxiously at the bar and then to the ignition key. Shaking, I turned the key. The engine turned over instantly, I turned the corner, got home, and on my ninetieth day dry went to my first AA meeting. I haven't had a drink since those thirteen vodkas the day I went to the VA and that was in January 1985. Today I have friends, hope, serenity, and honesty. I put my yearly anniversary medallions above my Silver Star, Bronze Star, and two Purple Hearts, because they were tougher to get. Today I really feel like a hero!

-- Bill G. , Albany, New York

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CALENDAR YEAR HIGHLIGHTS (last 12 month stats)

Average Number of Intergroup Reps Attending Monthly Meetings — 37

Group and Individual Contributions Total — 84,445.00

Number of Big Books and Twelve & Twelves Sold — 7,299

Average Number of Monthly Visitors to www.aabroward.org — 4,000

Number of Where & Whens sold — 8,120

THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO CARRYING THE MESSAGE!

(continued from page 2)

As I said earlier, tolerance is a two-way street. At the 10 A.M. meeting the following day, virtually the same crowd appeared, except the young Bible-reader. I introduced the topic of "tolerance" for the discussion, and then gently challenged those present about their behavior at the previous day's meeting. I said that tolerance must be practiced both ways--both toward those of an agnostic tendency and toward believers with an evangelical tendency.

AA's unity does not depend on uniformity or even conformity; it depends on love and tolerance of others with their peculiarities. In AA, I've learned to focus on similarities, not differences. AA is not the place for debates about religious dogma, but when newcomers attend, such slip-ups are inevitable. This is when tolerance is most applicable.

Narrow-minded bigotry has no place in AA. We neither promote nor attack another member's religious beliefs; nor is it our job to try to convert anyone to ours. We in AA are here to save drunks, not souls!

—Dave C., Springfield, MO

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Area 15 General Service

Treasurer, PO Box 1784
Pompano Beach, FL 33061

District 9 General Service

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

AA BIRTHDAY'S

January Celebrants

Broward Men's

Domenick ~ 23 yrs.
Manny C. ~ 27 yrs.

Serenity Altogether

Dennis M. ~ 30 yrs.

One Day at a Time

Mena L. ~ 17 yrs.
Paulette R. ~ 19 yrs.

YANA Group

Ebony ~ 11 yrs.
James ~ 18 yrs.
Sarai ~ 10 yrs.
Gerard ~ 26 yrs.

Oakland Park Group

Audra P. ~ 40 yrs.
Sterling J. ~ 42 yrs.

Smell the Coffee

George M. ~ 24 yrs.

Dania After Work

Tess ~ 16 yrs.

Pride 5:45

Clint W. ~ 34 yrs.

Westside Men's

Allan G. ~ 35 yrs.

Women's Honesty

Regina H. ~ 25 yrs.
Lorren ~ 2 yrs.

Sober Sisters

Linda D. ~ 28 yrs.
Lori D. ~ 2 yrs.
Alex ~ 8 yrs.
Casey K. ~ 16 yrs.

Focus on Sobriety

Anne B. ~ 13 yrs.
Janet B. ~ 32 yrs.
Jean C. ~ 23 yrs.
Randi ~ 23 yrs.
Sherry C. ~ 22 yrs.

NOW Group

Bobby V. ~ 31 yrs.

Riverside Group

Howie K. ~ 38 yrs.

Express Group

Patrick ~ 6 yrs.
Melissa ~ 2 yrs.
DJ ~ 2 yrs.
Jess ~ 4 yrs.
Bill ~ 5 yrs.

Tuesday Night Step

Don F. ~ 40 yrs.

Joy of Sobriety

Glenn K. ~ 44 yrs.
Steve W. ~ 33 yrs.

Other Notables

Debra H. ~ 23 yrs.
Glenys H. ~ 33 yrs.
Kelly T. ~ 16 yrs.
Nancy F. ~ 18 yrs.
Charlie C. ~ 27 yrs.
Ed T. ~ 32 yrs.
Meghan ~ 8 yrs.

FtL Primary Purpose

Big Book Study

Heather C. ~ 6 yrs.

Freedom From Alcohol

Heidi ~ 22 yrs.

Living in the Solution

Judi ~ 17 yrs.
Erica ~ 5 yrs.
Eileen ~ 14 yrs.
Clay ~ 24 yrs.
Betsy ~ 4 yrs.
Greg ~ 4 yrs.
Sonia ~ 29 yrs.
Tony ~ 3 yrs.

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.)

*Things we cannot
change.....*



*Dorothy H.,
Sally D.*

*They will be missed.
May they rest in peace.*



December Celebrants not previously mentioned

Happy Destiny

Arielle ~ 7 yrs.
Violet ~ 2 yrs.

Express Group

Joanna ~ 25 yrs.
Rick ~ 18 yrs.
Joe T. ~ 7 yrs.

5-3-Zero Group

Dana C. ~ 23 yrs.
Shelby ~ 5 yrs.
Annette ~ 9 yrs.

Back to Basics

John A. ~ 21 yrs.

First Things First

Ken ~ 2 yrs.
Mary Hope ~ 26 yrs.

Women's Journey

Mary ~ 14 yrs.
Marie ~ 3 yrs.
Christine ~ 1 yr.

Women's Honesty

Donna ~ 8 yrs.

Downtown Dry Dock

Cindy K. ~ 29 yrs.
Colleen L. ~ 20 yrs.
Karl B. ~ 27 yrs.

Sober Sisters

Kelly ~ 6 yrs.

Victor E.

Larry M. ~ 30 yrs.

Let's Do Lunch Bunch

Dan ~ 1 yr.
Todd L. ~ 13 yrs.

Bikers in Recovery

Sonny ~ 33 yrs.
Brandon ~ 2 yrs.

Why It Works

Michael W. ~ 30 yrs.

A Step at a Time

Chris B. ~ 17 yrs.

Margate Group

Dennis B. ~ 33 yrs.

Coconut Creek Group

Robin C. ~ 30 yrs.

Other Notables

Christopher S. ~ 7 yrs.

Surrender is Freedom

Doug ~ 2 yrs.
John ~ 4 yrs.
George ~ 33 yrs.

Women's Step by Step

Heather M. ~ 5 yrs.

BCIC - Broward County
Institutions Committee

Next Meeting:

January 12 at 10:00 AM

Twelve Step House

205 SW 23rd St., Ft. Lauderdale

Next
Intergroup Meeting

Twelve Step House

205 S.W. 23rd St., Ft. Lauderdale

SUNDAY, January 27
at 1:00 p.m.

Local Readers Share.....

Christmas this year with my children proved to be like no other. Emily and Andrew are full-time college students and I am only 22 months sober. Last year was my first Christmas sober and it was bursting with stress and anxiety; I am not sure how I got through it without a drinking binge. This year, I am more content and have made considerable strides in my program. As I am in a better frame of mind, I wanted this Christmas to be filled with comfort and joy.

This is my first Christmas in warmth as I moved to Florida just this past year (yes, the "Promises" do come true). My children live in New England with their father when not attending school. So, this year, I had to make sure that I brought my children to me. The compromise was that they would be with me the week before Christmas and then travel to the north for the holiday. Even though I have been divorced for 4 years, this would be my first Christmas without my children on Christmas morning, so I wanted to make this week memorable.

Emily arrived 2 days prior to my son, Andrew, so she staked the blow-up mattress, leaving the couch to my son. She also claimed a special place for her luggage and the best blankets available as her own! When my handsome son (6-2"-- how did that happen?) arrived, he made it clear that he was to get the mattress. The sofa was too small, so he had a valid point. But then he moved all of her belongings into the hall closet and stole the best blankets. They immediately started fighting like 5-year-olds! I am certain that the "old me" would have added to the frustrations with taking sides, fixing the situation, etc. Instead, I let them deal with it and they came to a resolution on their own.

The week continued with a few upsets as Andrew brought work with him on this trip. In addition to being a full-time college student (that made the Dean's List, I might add), he is working full time as an app developer for a start-up. My son had been paid significant money and he had tight deadlines. Therefore, ALL of my plans with my kids (fishing for a day on a friend's boat, trip to Design District in Miami, renting scooters) were not possible. I was disappointed, but my sober thinking turned it around. I was able to spend some very quality time with Emily. She and I kept it simple and stayed close to home. We baked, laughed, baked some more and watched stupid television. (What happened to Kim Kardashian's body?)

The biggest mess of my drinking is my financial chaos. I have significant debt and I also recently lost a very noteworthy client. As I am practicing a program of honesty, I had to tell my beautiful children why I could not afford lavish gifts this year, nor pay for dining out during their vacation. I found my children's acceptance to be refreshing; they actually were hoping for many home-cooked meals. I could have increased my credit card debt and wowed Emily and Andrew, but my sobriety is teaching me to keep it simple. I am certain that the moments shared were enough for them, as they were for me.

One of my dear friends in AA has a lovely home and suggested that we co-host a holiday party so that my circle of AA friends could meet my children. Well, that was certainly one of the highlights of the week. Emily and I spent the day prepping yummy food and the party was beyond unforgettable. One of the best moments for me was watching Emily have a lively conversation with my sponsor.

The week ended with little fan-fare and I was concerned with too few memories. But now that they have flown north, I think of the moments. There were many moments of candid talk, some tears of pain and laughter, and so many hugs! My sweet boyfriend (yes, another dream come true in sobriety) was accepted and even enjoyed by my children. When I moved to South Florida last year, they were worried about my well-being and now they see me thriving. ***These are the gifts in sobriety.*** My mommy heart is filled with contentment and pride. I will cherish each and every moment of this Christmas week.

— Elizabeth C., Ft. Lauderdale

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., Suzanne J., Bob H., Anonymous I, Elizabeth B., Ron J., Tim S., Lois O., Richard H., Jennifer S., Pat R., Beth D., Craig G., Sandy P., Leo H., Vickie T., Howie K., Kerry W., Lewis G., James H., Joanne D., Gerry B., Don W., Eric P., Tara D., Denise J., Howard S., Bob D., Robert H., Sally S., Anonymous II, Jane T., Fran C., Peter S., Deborah C. and Rachel L.

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: entertaining, psychiatric, hepatitis, ultimate, divergent, tolerance, decorum, rehearsal, familiar, ignition, conformity redundant.

I AM RESPONSIBLE....

WHEN ANYONE, ANYWHERE, REACHES OUT FOR HELP,
I WANT THE HAND OF A.A. ALWAYS TO BE THERE. AND FOR THAT: I AM RESPONSIBLE.

NAME: _____ GENDER: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

PREFER: VOICE: _____ TEXT: _____ EMAIL: _____ CITY OF RESIDENCE: _____

WILL CALL BACK: _____ AND/OR PAY A VISIT: _____

AVAILABILITY: MONDAY to FRIDAY: _____ WEEKENDS: _____

8:00am-12:00pm _____ 12:00pm-5:00pm _____ 5:00pm-9:00pm _____ 9:00pm-8:00am _____

TO COMPLETE A 12-STEP CALL, you only need to be sober one day, but you NEVER GO ALONE.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE! SEND COMPLETED FORM TO: help@aabroward.org



Jan. 11-13	S. Fla. Area 15 Quarterly Assembly Tampa Airport Marriott, Free service workshops, guest speakers, banquets and General Service Area Business meeting on Sunday.
Feb. 2	8th Annual AA's Got Talent Show Coral Springs Charter School, 3205 N University Drive, Coral Springs. Dessert, Coffee, Entertainment. Adults only. 6:00 - 9:00 PM, \$10
Mar. 2	District 9 SYS Spring Fling Chili Cook-Off and Dinner NSU Cafeteria and Steele Auditorium, 3200 S. University Drive, Davie. Dinner 5:30 PM, Speaker 8:15 PM, Karaoke. Bring your best chili and enter contest. \$8 in advance/ \$10 at the door. Bring a dessert to share and a newcomer.
Apr. 27	56th Annual Intergroup Appreciation Banquet Tropical Acres Steakhouse, Griffin Road, Ft. Lauderdale, 6 PM Fellowship and Appetizers, 7 PM Prime Rib or Salmon Dinner, 8 PM Speakers, Followed by basket raffles. Elegant evening of fun and appreciation for Broward County Intergroup Tickets \$45 in advance only. Tables may be reserved for \$450.00