

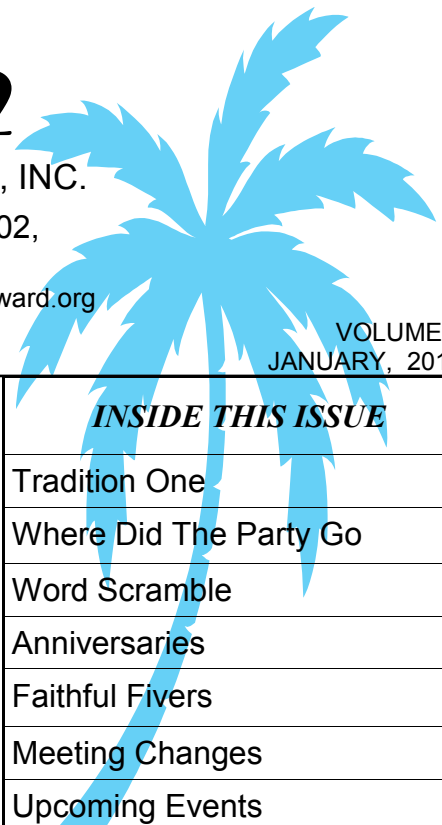


ROOM 502

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 1
JANUARY, 2015

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

My Bottom is Mine

Was yours high or low?

One alcoholic ponders the question

I was at a meeting recently, and a fellow with about a month of sobriety brought up the topic of “hitting bottom.” He wanted input as to what a bottom was. I listened for a while as people relayed their stories of hitting their bottoms—each one a little more dramatic than the last. It was one of those “If you think that’s bad, listen to this” meetings. Of course the high bottom/low bottom part of the subject came into the discussion. I raised my hand to offer my thoughts on the subject, but the meeting ended before I was called on.

When I finally stumbled into the rooms of AA over 30 years ago, I was rather typical of many drunks, displaying a confidence and self-assured attitude to cover up an internal feeling of self-loathing. In short, I thought of myself as a worthless piece of junk but could not let anyone know that. Almost all the things that happen to drunks had happened to me—multiple detoxes, problems with the law, serious debt, alienated family, difficulty staying employed, painful loneliness and unexplainable fear—but I needed to display that façade of having it all together.

Early on I went to a lot of speaker meetings, and I was told to identify with the speakers, not compare myself to them. But I didn’t really have any idea what that meant. I remember thinking often that many of the people at the podium had a lot worse of a time than I did. I even had thoughts that maybe I wasn’t so bad. I don’t know when I learned to identify rather than to compare, but thank God I finally did!

I have to believe that many new members came into AA with some of the same feelings that I did. I didn’t seem to belong anywhere, and without realizing it, I was looking for reasons as to why I didn’t belong. I carried a chip on my shoulder for a long time in defense of that time when someone would finally tell me that I was no longer welcome here.

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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.”

Tradition One: You Call This Unity?

At a recent AA forum, I heard some distressing news. A member reported that some old-timers in his area are going "underground" because they don't like the changes in AA and are frustrated by the problems. These underground meetings are open only to some AAs and allegedly have attendance requirements, such as having to be five years sober.

Just last night, a young man from my home group informed me that a similar practice has started in my area. Some AAs are starting meetings in their homes and "tapping" certain AAs to attend. The young man from my group said that he knew he didn't come from the right socioeconomic group to get "tapped."

Both of these instances caused me to reflect on our First Tradition, and to remember how I got introduced to its principles.

Early in my AA life, my sponsor insisted that I choose and commit myself to a home group. "You need to be part of a group," she said, "in order to grow in sobriety and learn the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous." So that's how One Parkway became my original home group.

It was there I learned that "our common welfare" referred not only to my group, but to AA as a whole. I was told that it was important for me to learn all I could about AA and how it functioned. I was directed to a wide range of AA literature and encouraged to participate in a variety of AA activities.

Every month before our business meeting, we held a Traditions meeting. Regardless of which Tradition we happened to discuss, almost without fail, someone would bring up Tradition One at the business meeting. In fact there was one old-timer who would always say, with much vigor, "If you can't get Tradition One, then, you can't get any of them." There was an amen corner that would chime in, "You're right!" Then we would go about trying to figure out what was or was not good for our common welfare.

There was always talk about commitment. My group taught me that being a committed group member meant putting the welfare of the group before my own; they said learning to do this would ensure my sobriety and therefore my life. Most often, my group members were gentle in teaching me these lessons, but now and then when my ego got out of hand and I decided to do things my way (like taking it upon myself to change the group's format), they loved the group enough and me enough to straighten me out on the spot and in no uncertain terms.

"Unity" was as difficult a concept for me to understand as was "common welfare." I thought it meant that we should never disagree or argue about anything. Once at my group's business meeting, in the midst of one of our usual heated debates, I angrily voiced this expectation. "You call this unity?" I shouted across the table at one of our old-timers. He smiled at me, looking rather amused, and said, "This is enthusiasm. We're arguing about how we can better carry the message." And so I was also taught that inherent, in Tradition One, is the idea that we each need to be willing to do our part for our common good and that we can only do that through participation.

The real demonstration of unity, I came to understand, was evidenced by what happened in the process of, and after, all that heated debate. Everyone got a chance to be heard. The group struggled to arrive at decisions that were for the "common welfare" of the group and AA as a whole. We held hands and recited the Serenity Prayer in unison at the end, knowing that, despite our disagreements, we were each coming back to the group and to AA because we needed it to survive. We each had a responsibility to make sure AA continued to be there for the next alcoholic coming in the door.

At times, I have fallen short of the ideals implicit in Tradition One. Sometimes it's simply because I don't stop and think long enough to realize the ramifications of my actions.

Continued from Page 1

I wonder if the fellow who brought up the topic was looking for some sort of justification for taking up a seat in an AA meeting. I wonder if he was having the same thoughts that I did about not belonging here. I wonder if he thought he would find some comfort in understanding exactly what or where the bottom was. I fear that not finding the answers to the questions he doesn't even know he is asking will cause him to go out and build on his resume until he feels he has qualified to occupy the seat he's taking up.

I don't imagine anyone ever will know what an alcoholic's bottom is. It's personal. I have known sober alcoholics who have languished for years in prison. I have known sober alcoholics who have lost all touch with their families. I have known sober alcoholics who only got here because a judge compelled them to be here. I have known sober alcoholics who only drank wine at their kitchen tables and were able to function perfectly in their daily lives.

It is my belief that my bottom is my own. You can't have it because you have your own. My bottom is not high, nor is it low—it is mine. And I am satisfied with it. I don't need to lower it or raise it. It's a point at which I can start building a new life.

— Paul S., Largo, Fla. —

Broward County Intergroup's 4th Annual

AA's Got Talent

(Adult only event)

Saturday, February 7, 2015

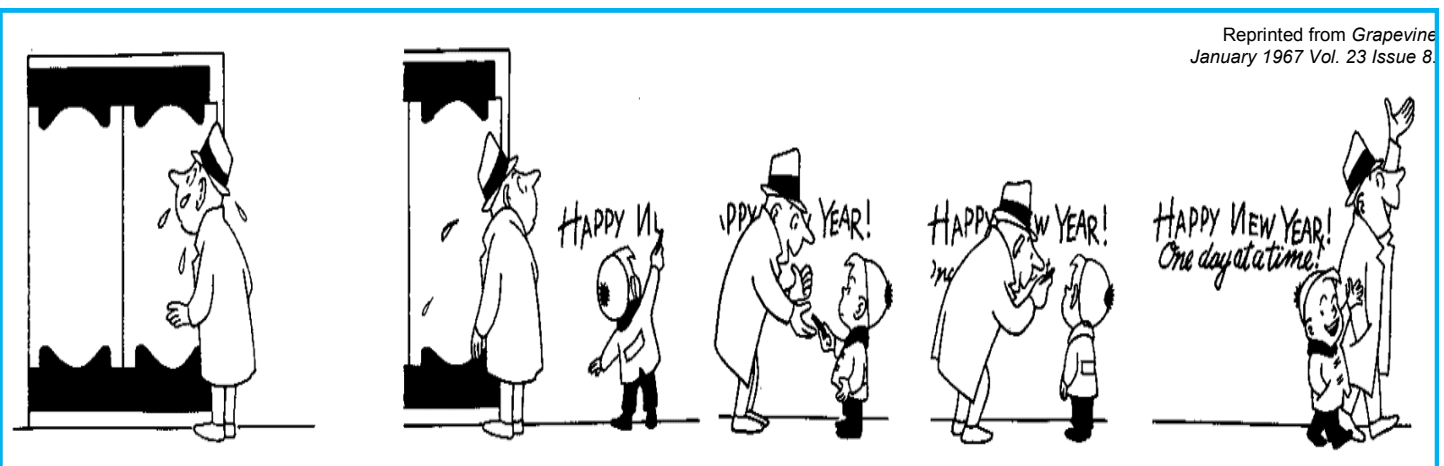
6:00pm-check-in, coffee, please bring a pick-up dessert
7:00pm Talent Show-\$10 in advance only-limited seating

Coral Springs Charter School

3205 North University Drive
Coral Springs, FL 33065

*We welcome singers, dancers, comedians, musicians to sign-up:
(Excluding bands due to time limitation of equipment set-up /break-down)*

Contact organizers at: AATalent2015@gmail.com.



Continued from Page 2

Last summer my husband (also an AA) and I took a cruise that docked in a small town in Mexico. A nice lady whom we had met on board ship at a "Friends of Bill W." meeting (attended by alcoholics and non-alcoholics as well) told us about an AA meeting in the town. I knew the lady was not an alcoholic and that she had attended the "Friends of Bill W." meeting because of a problem other than alcoholism. But partly because I didn't want to hurt her feelings and partly because it was convenient for me, I accepted her offer to take us to the local meeting and attend it with us. I could have talked with her about AA and our Traditions, but I chose not to.

At the local meeting that night, my husband and I found out that the group was really struggling for survival. It was the only AA group in town and its few members had never been exposed to AA anywhere else. They were so grateful to have AAs from the United States, where it all started. There was an American woman there who had gotten sober in this small town and a man who was in his first few months of sobriety. They didn't know the woman with us wasn't an alcoholic and called on her to share. She shared at length on a problem that had nothing to do with alcoholism. During her sharing, a local drunk came and stood in the doorway, apparently approaching AA for the first time. With horror, I realized that without thinking I had put my needs and desires first. What seems like an insignificant action could in reality mean signing the death certificate of the alcoholic who still suffers.

The experience in Mexico reminded me that, like the Steps, the Traditions require vigilance and work on my part if I am to grow in my ability to practice these principles.

I believe that the need as well as the desire to maintain our unity in AA hasn't really changed that much. I think what's changed is that we've gotten bigger and therefore the job and the responsibility have gotten greater. AA has taught me that being "a small part of the great whole" carries with it a responsibility and that there is always something that I can do to contribute to "our common welfare." When my sponsor told me that I needed a group to grow, she also told me that I wouldn't grow by running away and that I had a responsibility to show up.

I pray that leaving AA or going "underground" never looks like a good alternative to me. I hope instead to remember the lessons that the One Parkway Group, my sponsors, and fellow AAs have taught me. I've learned that I can strive to make my home group the best AA group in the world, which of course means one that conforms to our Traditions. I have learned that I can strive to be the kind of sponsor who tries to pass on all of AA to the newcomer, our three legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service, and not just what I think the newcomer wants or can handle. I have learned that I can and need to be of service to my group and, where possible, to AA as a whole.

Our literature reminds me that great love and great suffering are our disciplinarians; we need no others. I have no doubt that I suffered as much as I could stand from active alcoholism, but I am not sure I have learned to practice loving Alcoholics Anonymous as well as I believe is possible. I certainly have not yet learned to practice Tradition One perfectly. But I have enough love to try to grow in my ability to place our common welfare first. I am convinced that my life depends on it. I pray that I may continue to grow in unselfishness, enough to care about the lives of all alcoholics, wherever they may be, those that are with us, and those yet to come.

—Dorothy H. Piscataway, New Jersey—

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Bradenton, FL 34208
941-266-0609

District 9 General Service

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

A.A. Birthdays

January Celebrants

Focus on Sobriety

Janet B. ~ 28yrs.
 Melanie ~ 8yrs.
 Anne B. ~ 9yrs.
 Randi Z. ~ 19yrs.
 Ileana G. ~ 4yrs.

WBC Lunch Bunch

Larry ~ 2yrs.
 Joe ~ 3yrs.
 Earl ~ 22yrs.
 Sally ~ 29yrs.

Men in Recovery

Justin G. ~ 6yrs.
 Jamie B. ~ 5yrs.
 Robert C. ~ 5yrs.

Tamarac Group

Mark R. ~ 3yrs.
 Mark B. ~ 6yrs.
 Bobby V. ~ 27yrs.

Ft. Lauderdale Women's

Pattie F. ~ 11yrs.

You Are Not Alone

Gerard ~ 22yrs.
 Ebony D. ~ 7yrs.
 Sarai ~ 6yrs.
 James ~ 14yrs.

Oakland Park

Audrey P. ~ 35yrs.
 Sterling J. ~ 38yrs.

Westside Men's

Allan G. ~ 31yrs.

Northeast

Douglas M. ~ 21yrs.

Serenity all Together

Dennis M. ~ 26yrs.
 Bill M. ~ 22yrs.
 Glenn K. ~ 40yrs.

Meeting In Print

Michele C. ~ 1yr.

One Day at a Time

Mena L. ~ 18yrs.
 Paulette ~ 20yrs.

Noontime Sobriety

Deborah ~ 19yrs.
 Dave ~ 14yrs.
 Deena ~ 5yrs.
 Tommy ~ 3yrs.

Mountain Group

Kathy D. ~ 5yrs.
 Bob S. ~ 12yrs.
 Tony F. ~ 16yrs.
 Glenys ~ 29yrs.

Each Day A New Beginning

Gregory C. ~ 5yrs.

December Celebrants
 (not previously submitted)

Smell the Coffee
 Tom J. ~ 26yrs.



Congratulations to all of our celebrants. You deserve to be recognized. Celebrants should be submitted as early as possible, by the 15th, of the preceding month at the latest. (Example) January celebrants should be submitted by December 15th, to be published in the January Newsletter. Thank you for your time and effort.

Word Scramble Step One

1. loswereps _____
2. abelnumgeana _____
3. feetda _____
4. diveropecn _____
5. hollaco _____
6. humaniiloit _____
7. taddtime _____
8. padrew _____
9. sobesnios _____
10. crypatbnku _____

(answers on page 6)

It's your Birthday!

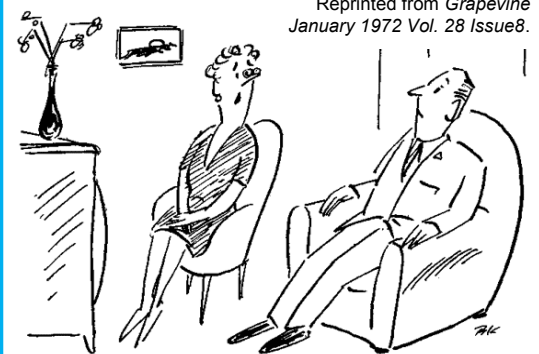
Many AA members across the country share their Anniversary by giving a dollar or two, for each year of their sobriety to their Intergroup Office. This insures that the same help that they received will be available to others who are new to the fellowship.

Start this year. 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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"Henry, I'm bored. Since you've been sober in AA I've nothing to complain about."

BCIC Broward County Institutions Committee

Next Meeting: January 10th
 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 11:00 a.m.

Upcoming Meetings

January 18th — February 16th

Where did the party go?

Birthday boy gets a big surprise at his first sober New Years Eve event

When I got to AA in San Francisco in June of 1981, I remember thinking, I sure better do it now, because New Years Eve is in six months and there's no way I'll sober up then! My natal birthday is also in December, so that whole month had always been one big party. But I knew I had to stop drinking now, and I was even desperate enough to try AA. I had told a friend about my drinking, and to my surprise (and slight annoyance), he said he had a friend in the program who would call me. I hesitated, but agreed, and two days later I found myself in AA.

At my first meeting I thought, "This isn't going to work! I'm too young, I will be the only gay man, and I don't even look like an alcoholic." Brother was I wrong ... and wonderfully surprised! I loved AA.

I went to meetings every day, got involved in fellowship and made lots of new friends. I found myself laughing all the time, which I thought would never happen again. I began to see and accept how alcohol had been at the root of all my problems. All those years I spent in therapy, thinking that if I just worked out my problems about my father and being gay, I wouldn't drink so much. What a relief it was to see that my alcoholism was not only not my fault, it was also not my family's fault either. I had a physical allergy. So I got sober that year.

Then December came, and I got scared. I loved being sober and wanted my new life terribly, but I also had a history of throwing a grenade into anything in my life that looked as though it was working. I knew how to be miserable and disappointed, but I had little or no experience when my life was actually going well. I can't even remember now what I did for my natal birthday that December. I'm sure I was at an AA meeting, because that's what I was doing every night, but I do clearly remember my first sober New Years Eve—I had a party.

I loved parties. Always had. And unless I became belligerent and nasty or just passed out, my parties were usually successful bashes with lots of music, food—and booze. My roommate at the time, Doug, was not an alcoholic but was thrilled that I had gotten sober and was anxious to meet my new AA friends. He bought party supplies, and decorated the apartment, and me not knowing yet about asking for any help. I exhausted myself cooking and cleaning and supplying all the coffee, soda and silverware.

That night at about 8:00, the doorbell rang, and what seemed like 200 people charged up the stairs into our San Francisco flat. It was a party! There was laughter, hugging and lots of storytelling. The apartment glowed with love and joy. Doug met people he found interesting and entertaining, and they accepted him right into the fold. Then at 12:30 a.m., after the celebration, something startling happened. In what felt like 30 seconds, Doug and I found ourselves standing alone in the middle of our apartment staring at each other wondering what had just happened.

"Well, that was awfully rude just to leave all at once like that," Doug remarked. Then he and I looked around the apartment, and to our amazement we saw that every ashtray, plate and cup was washed and put away. They even mopped the kitchen floor, and took the trash out with them! Our apartment was actually cleaner than it was when they came! As I stood there laughing, Doug went off to bed, shaking his head saying, "I don't know who these people are, but you're a very lucky man to have found them."

When I walked back into our spotless kitchen, tears welled up, and a feeling so overpowering and new, embraced me. For the first time I knelt down and thanked God for my sobriety and for bringing me these people and the program of AA. I realized that this was the gratitude I'd been hearing about for the last six months. I couldn't remember the last time I was sober on a New Years Eve, and I may not be able to remember all 31 sober holidays since. But I will never forget that night on my clean kitchen floor.

—Anonymous, New York, N.Y.—

Reprinted from AA Grapevine ©
Nov 2012 Vol. 0 No. 0

Answers from page 5:

1. powerless 2. unmanageable 3. defeat 4. providence 5. alcohol
6. humiliation 7. admitted 8. warped 9. obsession 10. bankruptcy

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 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?

Make a New Years Resolution, of only five dollars a month to help carry the message of A.A.

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

*Things we cannot change,
They will be missed by all who knew them.*

Ed C. Chris M.

Jay M. Ulysses M. Roy C.

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

Come As You Are, 7:00 p.m. Lambda South Clubhouse, in Fort Lauderdale. **No longer meets.**

Lighthouse Point Trinity, 7:30 p.m., Will no longer meet Thursdays., and has moved to St. Elizabeth Catholic Church, 3331 NE 10th Terrace, Pompano.

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.**

Riverland Recovery, 8:00 a.m. Abiding Lutheran Church, 1900 SW 35th Ave. **No longer meets.**

Downtown Dry Dock, 5:30 p.m. Closed Discussion Men's Meeting, will now be an Open Literature Meeting.

Thursday

Living Young And Sober, 7:30 p.m. Oakland Park, has moved to St. Frances Mission, 208 SE 8th St. 33301

Friday

NEW MEETING Coffee Pot Group, 8:00 p.m. Pro-Am Building, 1915 NE 45th St., (Florinada Rd.) 33308

Saturday

Saturday Downtown, 8:30 p.m. City Hall Building, 100 N. Andrews Ave. Fort Lauderdale, **No longer meets.**

NEW MEETING Woman's Steps to Spiritual Healing, 8:00 a.m., St. Benedicts, 7801 5th Street, Plantation.

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

Sunday

NEW MEETING 11th Step Conscious Contact, 7:00 p.m., meets at St. Benedicts, 7801 5th Street, Plantation.

NEW MEETING Fresh Page 12 Step Sponsorship, 2:00 p.m., meets at the Sanctuary, 1400 N Federal Hwy.

Daily

Good Morning God, 10:00 a.m. Sunrise, has moved to Martial Arts School, 4577 N. University Dr. Lauderdale 33351

NEW MEETING Hollywood Downtowner Group, 7 days a week, 7:00a.m., 10:30a.m., 3p.m., 5:30p.m. 1829 Taylor St., Hollywood. Rear entrance.

Lambda Rising, 7:30 a.m., **No longer meets** Tuesday and Thursdays, Lambda South Clubhouse, Ft. Lauderdale.

4th Dimension Club House, has moved to, 4425 Hollywood Blvd., (Next to Post Office). Parking and entrance is in the rear.

Upcoming Events

- Feb.5- Feb.8** **2015 Spacecoast Round-up**, Radisson Resort at the Port, 8701 Astronaut Blvd. Port Canaveral. Registration \$30.00 thru January 11th., \$35.00 after. For more info. go to www.aaspacecoast.org.
- Feb. 7** **4th Annual AAs Got Talent**, Coral Springs Charter School, 3205 North University Dr. Coral Springs. Contact organizers at: AATalent2015@gmail.com. Tickets \$10.00. Limited seating. Adults only. Coffee and desserts!
- Mar. 14-16** **SoberStock 2015**, Camp Brorein, 16901 Boy Scout Rd., Odessa, FL. Three days of speakers, meetings, bands, food & fellowship. Weekend \$40.00 per person, \$50.00 at the gate. For more info. Visit www.soberstock.com.
- Mar. 11-15** **Florida Roundup 2015**, The Deauville Beach Resort, 6701 Collins Avenue, Miami 33141. Registration \$70.00, For more info, or to register, go to: floridaroundup.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. \$40.00. Save the date! Tickets available soon.