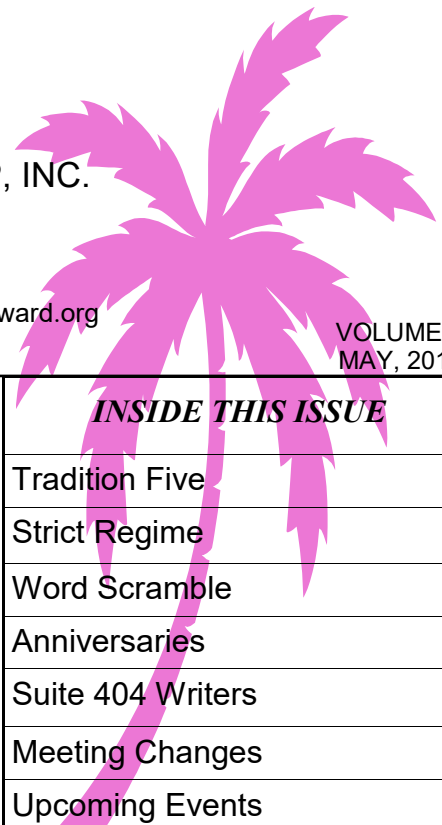


Suite 404

BROWARD COUNTY INTERGROUP, INC.
 Oakland Commerce Center
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VOLUME 5
 MAY, 2016

The Fifth Step— “Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”

Step Five: the Importance of Being Choosy One AA's search for the right person to listen

I did my last Fifth Step four years ago over the course of several afternoons with my sponsor. Not until then did I understand why the "Twelve and Twelve" makes such a big deal about who you choose to have listen to your Fifth Step.

When I was drinking, I wasn't too choosy about anything. When the courts got hold of me and suggested I might want to go to AA meetings instead of the county jail, I drank my way through meetings for the next year, sharing steadily about how I was drunk today but for the grace of God. Then I experienced the happy ending that all drunkalogs in AA contain--the desperation to ask for help. I wasn't choosy then either--I picked the first person who seemed to be sober and happy. He told me exactly what he did every day to stay away from a drink and strongly suggested I do what he did if I wanted to stay away from a drink that day. I tried it and it worked.

After a year of not drinking and taking most of the suggestions, my sponsor sat me down and said, rather kindly, that I might get more benefit from working the Steps than calling him every day and complaining about every facet of my existence. Every day from then on when I called my sponsor, he asked if I had done my Fourth Step yet. After three months, I'd had enough and I sat down and wrote it out per his suggestion in one sitting. The next time I called with my complaints, he asked the same question and I gloated with the opportunity to ask, "When are you ready to listen?"

He called me over to his house on a snowy night and said, "So what's the most embarrassing thing you have on there?"

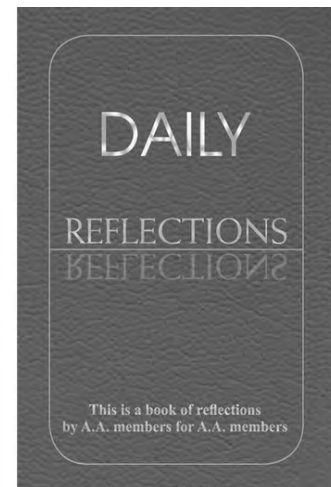
I told him the fifth most embarrassing item on my list and then I read along my Fourth Step columns, then on to my part in each resentment, then my fears, and finally we got to the sex. I hadn't done anything he hadn't done or, at least wished he'd done--or so he said to put me at more ease. All the while he took little notes, which were to be my helpful guide to my character defects.

When I was finished, he again asked what I had omitted. He didn't ask if there was something I had omitted, he simply said, "Now you can tell me what you left out." So I told him.

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THIS MONTH'S READER'S CHOICE



CONCEPT V

Throughout our structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.

Tradition Five: “Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”

Our primary purpose

There is a Fifth Tradition Group within our group. We think it helps to examine our group conscience every once in a while, especially that part of our conscience which could tell us whether or not we are properly performing our primary purpose.

You will remember that Tradition Five reads: "Each group has but one primary purpose-to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers." That seems to place a responsibility on a group, over and beyond the responsibility of the individual who might meet with or sponsor a suffering alcoholic. There have been at least a few occasions when one of us after visiting a prospect once or twice will decide that the fellow is "not ready" or "too far gone" or "not wanting to stop"; and then proceeded to forget him, despite the fact that the suffering alcoholic had approached the group for help.

Our little Fifth Tradition Group (made up of four or five new and old members) tries to keep track of such prospects and according to their judgment, may suggest that another member-closer perhaps because of neighborhood, vocation or age group-give this still-suffering alcoholic an occasional phone call or suggest a pick-up for a meeting that might have some special mutual interest. Sometimes it works . . . at least it makes us feel that we are giving the fellow or girl another chance, perhaps in recognition of the multitude of "another chances" given each of us.

We ask our members to keep this "group-with-in-the-group" informed of all prospects that come to us, through Intergroup, local phone exchange, clergymen, doctors, or when they might just come to our open meetings, seeking information for themselves. We don't hound or chase after those who don't want us, but there probably are some who need just a little more encouragement.

Also, this group extends its interest to those who are new in AA and those who seem to have a little difficulty in stopping and even to those around for awhile who haven't picked up any group activity or made any firm friendships. Ofttimes this group will suggest that one of us become a "friend" to such people. We don't appoint sponsors for the newcomer because we believe that each one has the personal privilege of selecting his sponsor, but many times this "friend" can make the newcomer feel more welcome, and help him better understand what is going on. We don't spy or pry or try to find out when the fellow or girl had his or her last drink . . . we just want to be sure they know we are interested and eager to help when asked.

We want to make sure that no one will continue to suffer. . . just because we forgot!

Our Fifth Tradition Group meets occasionally to review the group membership to remind others that someone has been around for a few months and may be ready to talk at an open meeting or lead a closed meeting. They often suggest that a member might be helped if he were encouraged to get into a new group activity, or someone else is getting close to an anniversary and should be given a chance to decide whether he or she wants to celebrate at an open meeting. They also greet our guest speakers at open meetings and see to it that they know we appreciate their visit. They keep their eyes open for any new faces which might indicate that another suffering alcoholic is seeking help; and try to neglect no one.

In fact, they are doing what probably all of us want to do, yet so often overlook. They are not relieving us of our individual responsibility or stopping any of us from being as active as we want to be. They are merely watching in the background so that we as a group will be ever mindful of our primary purpose-to help all who come to us for help. Someone . . . at some time . . . helped each of us. We want to be sure that no one will continue to suffer . . . just because we forgot!

—ANONYMOUS, Hartsdale-Ardsley, New York—

Continued from Page 1

"Is that it?" he asked.

"Yes," I said.

"Congratulations, you just did your Fifth Step," he said. Then I went to throw the Fourth Step in the fire. He suggested I not do that because that was my Eighth Step list.

More years went by and I was floundering and stalled in sobriety. One night I met a man who was younger than I was and had less time sober than me but I liked his message and his approach to the Steps, so I asked him for help. He took me through the Steps yet again.

After weeks of scribbling, I had about sixty pages filled with resentments, fears, and sex issues. We met in his apartment at ten in the evening. There was no smoking in his home--a sign of how much time had passed between my first Fifth Step with my first sponsor and this one--and he offered me tea instead of coffee.

I raced through my resentments and he stopped me dead in my tracks on page two. "Could you say that again?" he asked. "Sure." I repeated the resentment name, why I was angry, what it affected, and then my part in it. "Do you really think that was your only part in it?" he asked. I could see this was going to be a very long evening. I was on page two of a sixty-page document, and he was already quibbling. "I think," he said, "that what you did was wrong, that she had no part in it, and that you should add this and this and this to your part in it." "Oh," I said.

We were stuck on this point for a long, long time. Three hours and no cigarettes later, I was at the boiling point, arguing at 2:00 A.M. on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. "Listen," I said, "we have fifty-eight more pages to get through."

That's when the suggestion of picking the right person to hear your Fifth Step came loud and clear to me. He told me if I didn't agree with his perception, then I wasn't alcoholic--just a sociopath. He added that if we couldn't get past this one point then there was no point at all in reading the rest of the fifty-eight pages. Then he told me we were done with the Fifth Step, congratulated me on my work, and showed me the door.

This was a dispiriting experience. I had been in AA long enough to know that the young man didn't have enough experience to know what he was talking about, but I was thrown. The next afternoon I went to my regular AA meeting and shared my experience and after the meeting I met a man who said he would be happy to hear my Fifth Step and to help in any way possible. He was older than I and had more time in AA than I did and had a drinking history that made sense to me and a recovery that was attractive to me.

We met over the course of several afternoons in my apartment, and I read every word of the now sixty-two page document (making room for my fresh new resentment).

Over the course of this Fifth Step, I came again to the same resentment that had proved to be such a sticking point with the previous sponsor. The resentment was so strong that I had repeated it several times in the course of the sixty pages and by the third mention I saw that I put the name, and precisely, to the word, my part in it as the previous sponsor had suggested. If only we'd gone a little further on, the young sponsor would have been satisfied, at least with that detail.

When I was almost finished with this Step, I came to some last details. I mentioned them to the man who was listening to me and he started to have an emotional response. I was surprised because I had never mentioned this one fact of my life to anyone before. It certainly had nothing to do with drinking, at least not explicitly. I asked what was wrong and he thanked me for sharing that detail and said how much it touched him to be told such a thing.

It was at that moment that I really felt what the "Twelve and Twelve" promises us: that we will no longer feel alone. For an alcoholic, that is precisely like having a life for the first time.

—Anonymous, New York, New York—

Following a strict regime kept him alive in the Army and keeps him sober in AA

One of the most important things I have learned from my sponsors is discipline. Without it, I would slowly but surely revert back to my old ways or suddenly find myself caught up in that critical unguarded moment we sometimes speak of.

I don't believe that the program is hard to do, despite the fact that I didn't believe it would work for me, and at first I had no love of Step work. My program doesn't require that much "work" these days, but it does require persistent action on my part.

On my first day in AA I asked for a sponsor and he told me that I needed to do five things every day. I wrote them down inside the front cover of my newly purchased Big Book and continue this custom with the men I sponsor.

I have heard slight variations on these things in the years that I've been in the Fellowship. As he related them to me, they were: Don't drink, Pray at least twice a day, (In the morning ask God to take away my desire to drink, and in the evening thank him for keeping me sober.) Go to an AA meeting, Read some AA literature. Talk to another alcoholic

None of my sponsors (I've had three in my nine years) has ever suggested that I discontinue any of these practices. I continue them to this day with only minor deviation. I say the Third Step Prayer in the mornings and sometimes only go to five or six meetings a week.

Do I really need that many meetings at this point in my sobriety? Only God knows for sure. Anyway, I like to go most of the time to see if I can be helpful to someone else. This question leads me to the story that I wanted to relate.

In 1982 I was a soldier in the U.S. Cavalry doing field training in the Yakima desert. I worked flight operations for the Army. My "office" when in the field was a M588 armored personnel carrier and I was about half asleep at two or three in the morning one night while pulling radio watch. There was no radio chatter, and I was bored out of my mind when I saw that the generators needed to be fueled. I went to the back of the vehicle and grabbed a five gallon can of gas and headed for the commander's hatch.

As I was passing my work station I grabbed my helmet off my desk without thinking about it and put it on. I had been trained to do this anytime I went outside while in the field. I reached the hatch and got a rather precarious grip on the ladder with the hand that was holding the gas can. I took one more step up the ladder as I threw the hatch back with one arm.

Hatches on armored personnel carriers are approximately three feet in diameter, made of solid steel and spring-loaded. When I threw the hatch upward I didn't use quite enough force. Looking back, I can clearly remember hearing the hatch touch the latch mechanism, but I did not hear the latch engage.

The next thing I knew, I was on my butt at the bottom of the ladder with a terrific headache. That massive piece of steel had hit me squarely on top of the head with tremendous force. Had it not been for my "steel pot," I would have surely suffered a crushed skull and died there on the spot.

What motivated me to grab that helmet at the one crucial moment that would unwittingly be a matter of life and death? We were not in real combat and no one would be shooting at me, so I didn't think I needed to have it on. It was the middle of the night and no one was around. All the sergeants and officers were asleep, so no one would yell at me for not wearing it.

I put it on without thinking, simply because that is what I was trained (or disciplined) to do. On this occasion at least, that discipline saved my life.

Discipline can be defined as doing what is necessary, regardless of whether you want to or whether you think you need to. Discipline has a brother named courage, which could be defined as applying discipline in the face of fear (but that's another story).

What does this have to do with being sober? There are times I don't want to go to meetings or do those five things every day. There are times when I would rather be sleeping in my warm comfy bed than talking to someone who's having trouble, or getting up at seven on Sundays to have breakfast with my AA family. There are certainly times when I don't feel like I need to do those five things.

The thing is, I don't know which meeting or on what occasion doing one of those five things will literally save my life. I would hate to miss the one I really needed for lack of discipline.



May Celebrants

Each Day A New Beginning

Anthony D. ~ 7yrs.
Edna C. ~ 8yrs.

One Day At A Time

Tammi Jo ~ 6yrs.
Eddie M. ~ 24yrs

Meeting in Print

Bill G. ~ 14yrs.
Carl H. ~ 31yrs.
Craig C. ~ 30yrs.

Oakland Park

Chris M. ~ 6yrs.

Nautical Group

Larry ~ 23yrs.
M.J. ~ 9yrs.
Christine. ~ 21yrs.
Leslie ~ 5yrs.
Dave ~ 20yrs.
Paul ~ 7yrs.
Jeanne ~ 5
Laura ~ 3yrs.
Jim ~ 6yrs.

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.
3317 NW 10th Terrace, Suite 404
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

Thank You

We at Broward County Intergroup would like to send a special thank you to all of the volunteers who helped make our "Volunteer Appreciation" Dinner a success. And to those who showed up for our Open House. You have gone ABOVE AND BEYOND your willingness to serve.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU,

Congratulations to all of our celebrants. You deserve to be recognized.

We at Intergroup love to show the newcomers in this program that it works. One of the best ways we find to do that, is by publishing the years our members are celebrating, under the name of your homegroup. This shows newcomers that meeting makers make it.

We have over seven hundred meetings a week in Broward County. Please help us to pass on this message by submitting the celebrating members of your group, or you personally, for publication.

Celebrants should be submitted as early as possible, by the 3rd week, of the preceding month. (Example) May celebrants should be submitted by April 20th, to be published in the May Newsletter. Thank you for your time and effort.

Word Scramble Tradition Five

1. gmasese _____
2. seropup _____
3. tuyni _____
4. raryc _____
5. pfliwshleo _____
6. progu _____
7. rocwenme _____
8. mayripr _____
9. miuhtiy _____
10. rusfsfe _____

(answers on page 6)

BCIC Broward County Institutions Committee Next Meeting: May 14th

10:00 a.m. at the Twelve Step House,
205 SW 23rd St., Ft. Lauderdale.

Intergroup Meetings Are held at:

The Twelve Step House,
205 S.W. 23rd, Ft. Lauderdale,

Upcoming Meetings

May 15th — June 19th
at 1:00 p.m.

General Service Office, NY

P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10164-0371
212.870.3127

Bridging The Gap

877.207.2242

Broward Co. Intergroup, Inc.

3317 NW 10th Ave. Suite 404
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309
954.462.7202

BCIC

P.O. Box 22701
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33335

Area 15 General Service

Treasurer, P.O. Box 206
Bradenton, FL 34208
941-266-0609

District 9 General Service

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

Suite 404 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 thoughts and experiences with A.A.

We love to run articles written by local people in A.A. You need no prior publishing experience.

All it takes is a little willingness and a desire to share.

Here are some guidelines that might help you contribute to our newsletter:

Before writing your article, you may want to go through a couple of previous newsletters to see what type of article you might be interested in writing about. We love to hear stories about experiences you might have had working your steps, or what being a member of AA has taught you about the traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. You might want to take a photograph of the room your home-group meets in, and give a brief history of that meeting, or mention what that meeting has meant to your sobriety. There are any number of topics to write about. We are always looking for material, as long as it relates to AA and reflects AA's singleness of purpose.

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

Suite 404 readers tell us about their favorite passages in AA literature

My favorite passage from AA literature comes from: As Bill Sees It, page 3, "Pain and Progress." And reads as follows:

"Believe more deeply. Hold your face up to the Light, even though for the moment you do not see."

I like this passage because it reminds me to "believe that you believe" even when I'm not feeling spiritually fit. It also reminds me to "act as if" and look for the positive. In fact, as soon as I remember the passage, it brings me back to all the times when my Higher Power did for me what I could not do for myself.

—Marcia S., Hollywood, FL—

Special Angels

Special angels come in many disguises, many shapes, forms and sizes; a letter, phone call, ride, or a helping hand to the needy. We are too busy or lost in self to notice their presence in our day. They are the care-tenders of the soul, whose strength we take without being told. They seek no glory or praise for what they do, just giving it all away to you. Faith, hope and love, giving daybreak another day. Their shoes would be hard to fill, unless you feel this special thrill.

No matter what condition you might be in, just giving a smile, or even a hug, keeps the chain of special angels unbroken. Be that special angel unbroken. Be that special angel just for today, gladden the heart in the words you day.

Even the happy ones will have a better day.

—Lil M., Fort Lauderdale, FL—

Answers from page 5:

1. message
2. purpose
3. unity
4. carry
5. fellowship
6. group
7. newcomer
8. primary
9. humility
10. suffers

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., Ron J. Bob H., Anonymous I, Bobby V., Janet M., Elizabeth B., Happiness Is Group, Lillian M., Tim S., Milinda B., Barbara S., Lois O., Richard H., Richard S., Sam B., Mark S. Howard S., Douglas C., Jennifer S., the other Bob H., Carol B., the original Bob H., Leslie R., Eric P., Tara D.
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:

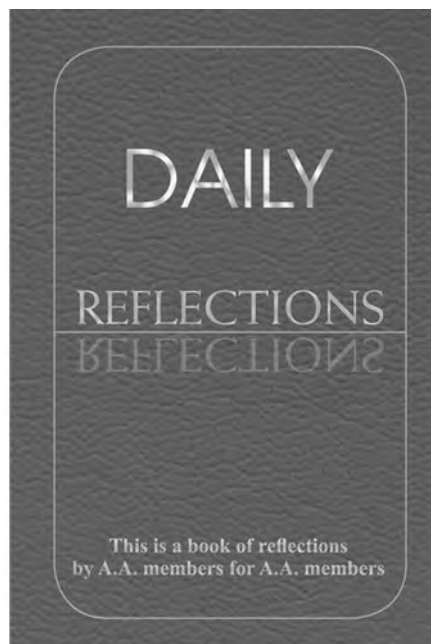
Broward County Intergroup, Inc. 3317 NW 10th Terrace, Suite 404, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309

Suite 404 readers tell us about their favorite AA literature

Daily Reflections is a book that I read everyday for the first four years of my sobriety. I usually started my day in a quiet area, away from my phone and all of the outside noise. I read it the daily passage and contemplate the contents of what I had just read, and then I would read it again.

What this did for me on a daily basis was put me in a mindset of recovery. It reminded me of my primary purpose and helped me go through the days "trials and tribulations" with much more serenity and a sense of calm.

—Philip S., Ft. Lauderdale, FL—



Thank you to all the dedicated volunteers in Broward County, and for all you wonderful alcoholics who continue to support your Intergroup office.

MEETING CHANGES

Wednesday

NEW MEETING Practice These Principles, 9:00a.m., St Vincent Church, St. Paul Hall, 6350 18th St., Margate, OSTD.

Thursday

Thurs. Night Men's BB Study, 7:30p.m., Luther Mem. Church, 1925 N. 60th Ave. Hollywood. **No longer meets.**

New Way of Life, 7:30p.m., Restoration Outreach, Hollywood. **Has Moved to Gloria Dei Lutheran Church**, 7601 SW 39th St., Davie, FL. **It now meets at 7:30p.m. Not 8:30p.m.**

Friday

NEW MEETING Constant Thought, 8:00p.m., Sunshine Cathedral, 1480 SW 9th Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, 33315

Sunday

Happiness Is, 11:00 a.m., Dunkin Donuts Conf. Room, 9170 W. State Road 84., Davie. **No longer meets.**

Daily Meetings

NEW MEETING Lunch Express, 12:10p.m., Pride Center, Room 207, 2040 N Dixie Hwy., Wilton Manors.

NEW MEETING Early Risers On The Beach, 7:00a.m., Cleveland House, At Pool, Smoking, 320 Cleveland Street Hollywood, FL 33019 OD.

SPANISH MEETINGS

Grupo Libertad, 8:00p.m., Monday. Sober Today Club, 1633 S 21st. Ave., Hollywood, **No longer meets.**

Upcoming Events

- May 5-8** **38th Big Book Seminar**, Fort Lauderdale Marriott North, 6650 N. Andrews Ave., Ft. Lauderdale. Registration \$25.00. For more info visit, www.bigbookseminar.org.
- May 20** **50th 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.
- May 21** **District 9 Archives Old Timers Meeting**, Coffee, Dessert, 3 speakers with 35+ years sobriety, full archives display, NSU, 3200 University Drive, Davie
- June 5** **General Service District 9 Founders' Day Picnic**, Snyder Park, 3299 SW 4th Ave., Ft. Lauderdale 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tickets \$8.00 in advance, \$10.00 at the door. Bring a newcomer and a dessert! For info. email supportyourservices@district9aa.org.
- June 25** **Unity XI Breakfast**, presented by BCIC, Intergroup & General Service District 9. \$7.00, Advance purchase ONLY. 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Plantation United Methodist Church, 1001 NW 70th Ave., Plantation FL 33313
- Aug. 3-7** **60th Florida State Convention, "New Freedom New Happiness,"** Innisbrook Golf and Spa Resort. , Palm Harbor, FL. For information and registration go to www.60.flstateconvention.com.
- Oct. 2** **41st Annual Broward County Intergroup Picnic**, Snyder Park Caldwell Pavilion, 3299 SW 4th Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, 11:30 a.m. to Sundown. D.J., 50/50 raffle, games, dancing, volleyball, and an open A.A. Speaker Meeting. Tickets \$7.00 in advance.

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.