



Suite 404

BROWARD COUNTY INTERGROUP, INC.

Oakland Commerce Center

3317 NW 10th Terrace, Suite 404

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

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

VOLUME 11
NOVEMBER 2017

Step Eleven — *"Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out."*

Once More With Feeling

I RECENTLY CAME BACK to AA after a five-year slip that was characterized by much self-pity, self-doubt, a growing sense of uselessness and isolation, and even in the face of some achievements, an embittered feeling toward my family and the world. "Slip" is not an accurate description of my desire to go back to drinking and drugging after being straight and sober for fifteen months. To be truthful, I had grown impatient with my inability to find peace and harmony. I developed a nostalgic yearning for those good times I had once had with the gang, instead of working at developing something new. So I shelved my spiritual life and went back to the familiar routine of getting high.

After I hit bottom, I returned to AA, but this time differently. My hunger for a new life was real. I read AA literature and other spiritual materials, prayed, attended meetings, talked the program to my family and other members, developed an honest sense of gratitude. I got much AA into my bloodstream, which helped to get the poisons out. My sponsor gave me many valuable suggestions for reading matter to accompany AA's Big Book, and I found myself marking the important passages, reading during breaks at work, all the time working the Steps. I stood at Step Three; I took it to the best of my abilities and later fell into doubt. I didn't feel any different and thought that I should. I stood at a turning point, one of the many in life, although I didn't realize it.

I was overworked one day and decided to go out, walk around the parking lot, anything to get away from the stacks of papers, requests, meetings, and the like that my job requires. I had a strong sense of "white-knuckle sobriety," which I had once endured, because of fear and stubbornness, for fifteen months. I couldn't figure out what I was feeling or where my thoughts were going, but I was locked in by tenseness and irritability. My pattern up until a few months before had been to buy a cold six-pack for starters go off someplace and work all that discomfort out of my system. Beyond it all was the fear that I didn't know who or what I was praying to, or why.

There's no other way to describe it except to say that a presence of something living began to blow all around me. It was warm and unhurried, but only a preview of what was to come. The same breeze that blew through the palm trees above took me, it seemed, into a secret hold and caressed me with its spirit. I knew my Highest Power had revealed a tiny portion of himself to me. All my going to him was coming back to me tenfold.

I communicated to God with my thoughts, but there didn't seem to be any need, for before I even completed the thought, I knew--as we know few things--that God as I understand him and I were so united that there was no need to think or question. "God is love," I was told in my early religious education, and now I had opened (continued on Pg.3)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Tradition Eleven	2
Volunteer Opportunities	3
Local Readers Share	6
Anniversaries	5
Word Puzzle	6
Meeting Changes	8
Upcoming Events	8

42ND ANNUAL INTERGROUP PICNIC

NOV. 5TH

**SNYDER PARK
CALDWELL PAVILION**

\$10 PLUS PARKING

LUNCH, LIVE BAND, 50/50

PLEASE JOIN US THERE

Concept XI

The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants.

Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.

Tradition Eleven - "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films."

Court-Ordered AA A member expresses doubts about mandated meetings

I am an alcoholic and a psychologist. I went to psychology school to try to find my own marbles. I got sober when I was a doctoral candidate and I found my marbles in AA. That is a long story, which I won't go into, but it has a bearing on what I do want to talk about.

I have been sober for twenty years. I have seen all sorts of treatments for alcoholism come and go. All are helpful to some degree.

I was recently talking to a recovering friend. She was telling me about her journey through DUI schools and "required" AA meeting attendance. She talked about the negative attitudes that her classmates had about AA, and about the ways they forged their slips and meeting information. It reminded me of the hundreds of people I have met in my work over the years who were alcoholic, but, when AA was mentioned, expressed a very negative response. "I went there when I was twenty-five and they made me go again when I was thirty . . ." and so on. Many of these people never gave AA another look. They had decided.

Some of these people have survived, finding sobriety in other ways. Some are just living out their alcoholism, and others are dead or jailed. One thing that I feel they all have in common is that they all appear to have been harmed by coerced attendance at AA. They experienced a forced exposure to ideas and principles before they were ready to absorb them. Later, when these ideas and principles were needed, they had already been rejected.

To me, this is a great sadness. Anyone who has sponsored a willing newcomer knows how long it can take for him to absorb new ideas, and to find substance in those ideas. The great majority of the coerced don't--or can't--even try. The rebellious nature of the alcoholic, and/or the absence of surrender, wouldn't allow them.

I can understand why agencies, courts, and treatment facilities send people to AA. It works for those who want it. Their rationale is that if we help one person out of a hundred, we have been successful. I have many friends in AA who started recovery in this manner.

But, I wonder about the other ninety-nine. These outside entities see that AA works, but they do not understand how. So AA has become a court sentence, a treatment goal, and a punitive hoop that must be jumped through in order to escape some system. I am not talking about an introduction to AA, i.e., attending a couple of beginner's meetings. Instead, requirements of up to ninety meetings are not unusual.

I am also concerned about our Traditions. Attraction rather than promotion has a great wisdom within it. In recovery, we are asked to become obedient to the unenforceable. For who can make another pray, be honest, love, pursue humility, undertake selfless giving, or practice tolerance? These are profound ideas and cannot be forced on anyone. Early recovery is a fragile enough time without changing the program into a monitored and mandatory experience.

My home group has been struggling with this issue for months. We are spurred on by one agency that collects information on who is chairing the meeting and the topic of discussion. Their intent is to minimize the amount of forgeries of meeting slips, but they seriously underestimate the creativity of a drunk. Another agency requires not only documentation, but notes on the content of the meeting. My home group finds this compilation of data to be objectionable and finally had to address this paper-signing issue.

After several business meetings, we came to this conclusion: Immediately prior to the start of the meeting, our chairperson announces: "In a minute we will begin our AA meeting. If there is anyone here who needs a paper signed, please bring it forward now. We sign these papers as a courtesy. Many of us understand your circumstances, but AA is not affiliated with the courts or treatment programs. You are welcome to stay for our meeting if you would like."

This seems to work quite well, although we are seeing fewer papers to be signed at that meeting. Those who do come to get them signed almost always stay for our meetings. The fewer papers may well be a signal that certain agencies don't like our meeting anymore. We like it, though, and welcome any newcomer with love, tolerance, and, we hope, attraction.

One time, when I was testifying in court, the State's Attorney asked me if I thought the defendant should attend AA. I replied that I would recommend that she attend a meeting, phone AA, or read some pamphlets. The State's Attorney said, "I can make her go." I asked how. He told me that he would require documentation of attendance. I told him that he would receive in return only a list of the first

(continued on Page 4)

(continued from Page 1)

my heart and knew it. After another ten minutes or so, the experience mellowed, and I walked back to my office, assured and quieted and full of peace. Often, but not as intensely, I approach the same type of peace through meditation. (And a similar experience happened to me about twelve years earlier, but I was too rebellious, too drugged, too angry to accept.)

I go on looking. If my heart [and] my mind are open, it's a lot easier to find that which I'm looking for, that which I need, that which I want. My Highest Power has brought me to a new awareness, a new sponsor, and a greater faith. I often turn my back on it all, but the next day it's all there waiting for me if I want it. And since coming back to AA, I haven't picked up a drink or drug. I look forward to each expansion of my life to something new. Down in the pit of my being is a unity with life and the loving action of God.

-- R. L., St. Petersburg, Florida

Copyright © AA Grapevine, Inc.
April 1985, Reprinted with permission.

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)

Performers and volunteers needed— please come and get signed-up

NEXT MEETING is November 18 at 1:30 PM ~ 441 Group in Margate

First planning meeting for the **55th Annual Intergroup Appreciation Banquet**
Intergroup office, Tuesday, November 28 at 5:30 PM

District 9's **WINTERFEST DINNER & ICE CREAM SOCIAL**
Will have planning meetings at Lester's in Pompano on Wednesdays at 7 PM
November 15th and November 29th

2018 Florida State Convention is at FORT LAUDERDALE BEACH AGAIN!!

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!!*



These Twenty-five Words. . .

This AA grew to recognize the true value of

THE SERENITY PRAYER has always played an important role in my recovery process, but only lately have I recognized the true value within these twenty-five words. The more I say it, read it, hear it--the more profoundly I feel its effectiveness as it relates to the handling of my one-day-at-a-time living experiences.

If I refuse to accept what I am powerless to change, I am negating the opportunity that God gives me to do so. He always grants me the serenity that goes hand in hand with the acceptance of that which I am incapable of changing. However, the key question I must ask myself is: "Am I willing to accept this serenity that He so graciously offers me?" I must remind myself of this whenever I think I have accepted something and then discover that my serenity is nil.

If I am sincerely trying to live according to the guidance of our AA principles, I will recognize that I have chosen not to accept the unchangeable, but only to tolerate it. To merely tolerate a situation or a person's shortcomings is to settle for a half measure. And there is the reason for my serenity deficit.

As for the second part of the prayer, "the courage to change" certain circumstances comes from inner strength--my abundant source of supply that my Higher Power constantly nourishes. But I must *choose* to draw upon this strength. It is always there--I need only be willing to use it.

The third part, "wisdom to know the difference," is the divine key to acceptance and courage. For me, this wisdom is revealed through the practice of our Eleventh Step, "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out."

Because this is an honest program, I must admit that I fall short many times in applying this interpretation of the Serenity Prayer. I realize I am still growing emotionally and spiritually. After several years of sobriety through the grace of God and AA, I am only beginning to acknowledge the God-power within me.

But by simply expressing my personal concept of this traditional and meaningful prayer, I am enabled to view with more clarity where I am today and where I was yesterday. Tomorrow is yet to be, but should God grant me another day, then hope, courage, and strength, through the implementation of the Twelve Steps and the Serenity Prayer, will be sufficiently provided to meet my every need. This I believe.

-- L. T., St. Petersburg, Florida

Copyright © AA Grapevine, Inc.
April 1979, Reprinted with permission.

(continued from page 2)

names of those chairing the meetings. "Then I'll have her sponsor document her attendance," he insisted. There wasn't time to explain.

Our district has not had an active Committee for Professional Cooperation for some time. Twenty years ago, we needed to inform the medical community about how AA works. Now we need to talk to the legal and treatment systems. Perhaps they will gain some understanding of our message.

I know that I had to become attracted to AA. Fear of repercussions or outside pressure weren't enough. I either had a desire to stop drinking or I wasn't through drinking yet. If coercion worked with alcoholism, we wouldn't need AA. A diligent probation officer would be sufficient. All interventions would work, and jails would be turning out sober alcoholics.

In my opinion, coercion is counterproductive. My question is: "What about the other ninety-nine?" They are out there and many have given up on us without ever really knowing us. How can we better serve them?

—Tim S., Indian Harbor Beach, Florida

Copyright © AA Grapevine, Inc.
October 2008, Reprinted with permission.

General Service Office, NY

P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10164-0371
212.870.3400

Bridging The Gap
877.207.2242

Broward Co. Intergroup, Inc.

3317 NW 10th Terrace, Ste 404
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309
954.462.7202

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

Area 15 General Service

Cary White, PO Box 56
Sebring, FL 33870

District 9 General Service

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

A.A. Birthdays

November Celebrants

Don't Forget

Bill N. ~ 43 yrs.

Ft. Lauderdale Women

Sue E. ~ 12 yrs.

Eleventh Step

Maurice C. ~ 18 yrs.

Spiritual Principles

Melani S. ~ 24 yrs.

TGIF

Jay G. ~ 21 yrs.

True Self

Larry M. ~ 14 yrs.

Bonnie B. ~ 36 yrs.

Bernie B. ~ 36 yrs.

Will M. ~ 32 yrs.

Focus on Sobriety

Barbara B. ~ 21 yrs.

Downtown Dry Dock

Louise ~ 32 yrs.

Trey ~ 38 yrs.

Sully ~ 38 yrs.

Delores ~ 38 yrs.

Broward Men's

Jack P. ~ 47 yrs.

John M. ~ 8 yrs.

Bill ~ 1 yr.

Free & Easy

Thom F. ~ 43 yrs.

Riverside

Joe L. ~ 67 yrs.

Stepping Out

John P. ~ 33 yrs.

Joe F. ~ 33 yrs.

Chrissy ~ 23 yrs.

Bob R. ~ 27 yrs.

Westside Men's

Armen Z. ~ 24 yrs.

Sean M. ~ 10 yrs.

Tim A. ~ 8 yrs.

YANA

Marie H. ~ 2 yrs.

Other Notables

Lynn C. ~ 26 yrs.

Dorothy C. ~ 19 yrs.

Men In Recovery

Bill W. ~ 36 yrs.

Bob G. ~ 35 yrs.

Will S. ~ 8 yrs.

Here and Now

Terry G. ~ 7 yrs.

Ray S. ~ 42 yrs.

Sober Sisters

Rachel G. ~ 15 yrs.

Oakland Park

Damian S. ~ 12 yrs.

Joel C. ~ 36 yrs.

Dan I. ~ 30 yrs.

Sober Women Today

Lori A. ~ 28 yrs.

Lunch Bunch

Jimmy Z. ~ 13 yrs.

Cliff ~ 24 yrs.

Jennifer ~ 6 yrs.

Bayview Beginners

Natalia S. ~ 2 yrs.

Joy of Sobriety

Frank B. ~ 2 yrs.

Donnie W. ~ 9 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:

November 11, 10:00 AM

Twelve Step House

205 SW 23rd Street

Ft. Lauderdale.

**Next
Intergroup Meeting
Twelve Step House
205 S.W. 23rd, Ft. Lauderdale
November 19 at 1:00 p.m.**

October Celebrants - not previously mentioned

Focus on Sobriety

Ginger ~ 7 yrs.

One Day at a Time

Barbara L. ~ 25 yrs.

Westside Men's

Larry B. ~ 13 yrs.

Brian A. ~ 12 yrs.

Joe T. ~ 12 yrs.

Lunch Bunch

Joe ~ 5 yrs.

Gerry G. ~ 7 yrs.

Clark ~ 10 yrs.

CC ~ 28 yrs.



Oakland Park

Mark Mc. ~ 27 yrs.

Ollie D. ~ 39 yrs.

Will B. ~ 9 yrs.

Elizabeth W. ~ 18 yrs.

Joy of Sobriety

Tony ~ 5 yrs.

Men In Recovery

Jack C. ~ 24 yrs.

YANA

Yolanda ~ 20 yrs.

Dave M. ~ 8 yrs.

*We at Intergroup want to take this
time to wish all of you and your
families in Broward County AA
a Happy and Healthy Holiday season.*

We are so grateful for you all!

God Bless You now and always.



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.*

T H U G S O

S T A N O R I L E

N E G E D L O W K

C A N T O T A R T I

G U N T R O P E I R

R O T M O O N P I

S E X T I E V E C U

T E A M D A D N

S T O N L U C A N S T

T R I P N A P E C A O I

N I T O D C U N I

D R U G T A T E I

Suite 404 readers share

If I know anything after 24 years of sobriety, it's that steps three, seven and eleven keep me right-sized. Every time I hear "How it Works" I am reminded "that God could and would if He were sought" and I know He does. When we improve our relationship with the God of our understanding, through prayer and meditation, we not only become aware of our Higher Power, but we become alert to reality, to ourselves and to others. We have entered the world of the Spirit.

The 11th Step gives me some definite and valuable suggestions. The Big Book instructs us "when we retire at night" to constructively review our day. If I follow the instructions, my belly button barometer or God-consciousness makes me very aware of when I'm not practicing these principles in all my affairs.

I remember my 3rd Step, as well, each morning, by saying a simple prayer; "Direct my thoughts, my walks, and my talks. Thy will be done, not mine." Even today, it amazes me how much better I feel when, at a 4-way stop, I let another driver go first. Maybe one day I'll let everyone at the stop sign go first — wouldn't that be amazing?! For me, a humble and sincere request equals prayer.

Meditation is our step out into the sun. For many of us, learning to meditate started with reading the 11th Step (or St. Francis) Prayer, several times very slowly, savoring every word and trying to take in the deep meaning of each phrase and idea. As though lying upon a sunlit beach, we can relax and breathe deeply of the spiritual atmosphere with which the grace of this prayer surrounds us.

I find that going to retreats to pray and meditate is very helpful and I've done that for many years. Going to a meditation meeting on the 11th Step is another great way of improving my relationship with my Father in heaven. Emotional balance is key. With it, we can broaden and deepen the channel between ourselves and God, as we understand Him.

Perhaps, one of the greatest rewards of meditation and prayer is the sense of belonging that comes to us. We are no longer lost and frightened and purposeless. The moment we catch even a glimpse of God's will, the moment we begin to see truth, justice and love as the real and eternal things in life, we are no longer deeply disturbed by all the seeming evidence to the contrary, that surrounds us in purely human affairs. We know that God lovingly watches over us. We know that when we turn to Him all will be well with us, here and hereafter. It is the peace that I live in — knowing this to be true!

—— Barbara, Broward County

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: sought, knowledge, Intergroup, executives, consultants, induction, relations, attraction, promotion, mandated, appreciation, gratitude.

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.**

Things we cannot change.....

Tommie H., Mary B., Coby H.

They will be missed. May they Rest in Peace.



Gratitude can transform common days into Thanksgiving, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into

Blessings

- William Arthur Ward



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.

Wednesday

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

Thursday

Rock Group which meets at 3765 NE 18th Terrace in Pompano has changed the time from 8:30 to 8 PM.

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—OSPD

Saturday

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

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



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

Upcoming Events

- Nov. 5** **42nd Annual Intergroup Picnic** - Snyder Park, Caldwell Pavilion, 3299 SW 4th Ave., Ft. Laud 11 AM - 4 PM, Live Band, 50/50 Raffle, Volleyball, Kids Games, Speakers at 3 PM. Tickets \$8 in advance, \$10 at gate - Advance sales 2/\$15 - Kids under 12 eat free. Lunch includes 1 drink.
- Nov. 10** **District 9 Gratitude Dinner** 6 PM at the Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, 5555 N. Federal Hwy., Fort Lauderdale, 33308. Benefits the General Service Office in NY. Tickets can be purchased from your General Service Rep or other dinner volunteer. You can also send inquiries to gratitudedinner@district9aa.org
- Nov. 24-25** **21st Florida State Convention of Hispanic AA** Miami Marriott Dadeland, 9090 S Dadeland Blvd., Miami—For Reservations call 800-228-9294, use code: AMAAMAA
- 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.
- 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.