

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

STEP 10: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Safety valve

Using journaling as his Tenth Step, a self-critic attempts to conquer his turmoil

One evening, some years ago, I became aware of an endless stream of self-criticism flooding my mind as I was returning home at the end of a workday. I hadn't done this; I hadn't done that; I didn't have this; I didn't have that. I should turn my face to the wall in shame. I had no right to exist on this planet, etc. This self-flagellation simply has to stop, I said to myself. That night I made a list of positive things I had done that day: meditation and prayer in the morning, projects completed or advanced at work, the AA meeting I had attended. That list was an attempt to rein in my negative emotions and achieve some degree of emotional balance.

My sponsor was gentle with me in early recovery. "Why don't you write some of that out?" he would say, when I called him, sometimes three or four times a day, in the throes of fury over some wrong, real or imagined, that had been visited on me by my boss or my wife. But my emotions seemed to burst every dam I sought to construct. Once I had "the goods" on someone, I would go at them with prosecutorial zeal. I had given only cursory attention to resentments in my Fourth Step inventory; I paid a terrible price in not fully grasping that resentment formula in our Big Book: "I'm resentful at . . . Affects my . . . Where (was I) to blame?"

Today that resentment formula is a staple of my Tenth Step inventory. The surprising durability of the old idea that if someone wins, I lose, makes the formula essential. It is where I go when I am gripped by a recurring bad feeling about someone, whatever the cause. It is an effort to ease the power I have given people over me. Many times I have put pen to paper in a rage at man or woman or God and even as I wrote began to feel this release from emotional turmoil and a shift toward blessed peace. I am like a boiler in need of a safety valve to reduce the risk of explosion, and the Tenth Step is that safely valve. If I am to avoid endlessly recycling slights, affronts, and other personal injuries, then pen and paper become effective tools in leaching this emotional pain from my system. It is on paper that I begin to practice self-honesty, make real progress toward the self-discipline that sobriety requires, and slowly learn to treat others with the courtesy, kindness, justice, and love that the essay in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions sets as a goal.

Toward that end, I give free rein to my emotions on paper, as it does me no good to censor myself. "I feel X is vile. I feel it would be a happy day if he were to be run over by a bus." Feelings may not be facts, as we say, but they are powerful, and writing out my anger in terms of them is a necessary and cathartic first step.

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Concept X

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should be matched by an
equal service authority
the scope of such
authority to be always
well defined whether by
tradition, by resolution,
by specific job
description or by
appropriate charters and
bylaws.

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Tradition 10: Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues: hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Tradition 10: My Father, Myself

Discarding opinions, inside AA and out

Sometimes, I'm great at practicing the Tenth Tradition. Other times, I'm horrible at it. But my ability to apply this Tradition in my life has grown as I have gotten older in sobriety. I still slip up sometimes, as I think we all do. One guiding principle has become clear to me: I am practicing the spirit of the Tenth Tradition as long as I am sharing my experience, strength, and hope, and not my opinions. By practicing this, I've been able to strengthen my relationships in and out of the rooms, including a difficult relationship with my father.

One of the sayings I've heard in the rooms for many years is, "We go to meetings to give, not to get." For me, the difference between being a "giver" and a "taker" is the quality of what I bring to meetings with me. Am I sharing my experience, strength, and hope, or am I sharing my opinions? If I'm sharing my experience, strength, and hope, I'm sharing about how the principles I've learned in AA--such as service, unity, reaching out for help, acceptance, faith, or humility--have helped me to live life on life's terms just enough to stay sober for a few twenty-four hours. If I'm sharing my opinions, it sounds different, even to my ears. It sounds more like, "You should do this to stay sober," rather than, "This is what I did to stay sober."

In fact, sharing my opinions even feels different. It's almost as if I can feel that self-righteousness begin to seep out of my pores and coat me and whatever I say in an icky, prideful goo. This coating is usually preceded by my hearing something I disagree with in a meeting. Feeling my hand shoot up, I open my mouth to "correct" what I believe are my sober colleagues' delusions. Why I still feel sometimes, after years of sobriety, that it's my job to correct everyone's delusions is beyond me! Perhaps it's more manifestation of self-centered fear. Why else would I feel the need to always be right?

For many years, I would opine in meetings, saying things that were divisive, rude, and hurtful, because I felt that I had the "right" brand of sobriety. Some people I directed my rants at ten or more years ago still avoid me today. I can't say I blame them--it hurt when others did it to me. Talk about doing damage to group unity!

For me, the change in my thinking and sharing began when I had about five or six years of sobriety. An assignment from my sponsor meant I was to start practicing the Tenth Tradition with my family, specifically with my dad, as part of my amends toward him.

Basically, I had always felt afraid that I wasn't a good enough daughter for him, that he wished he'd had someone more normal, with fewer tattoos and fewer opinions that differed from his own. My fear that I wasn't good enough turned into a fear that he didn't love me. Being the kind of alcoholic I am and being a person from a loud, opinionated family, I decided that I'd alienate my dad by arguing with him about politics. That way, if he didn't seem to love me the way I wanted him to, I could chalk it up to politics--not to my deepest fears about our relationship.

Of course, that didn't work! In the course of an inventory, I realized that this was a ploy so that I didn't have to have a real relationship with my dad. I didn't want to risk finding out I wasn't what I thought he wanted me to be. I was used to arguing with my dad about politics, so that's what I did. Instead, I had to practice not arguing with him, one day at a time. This was hard--and scary. I actually had to talk to my dad about what was going on in my life, not about what was on the nightly news. It was much more personal. As time went on, it got easier. Still, there were a couple of times when I strayed, went into the personality of my politics, and ended up in shouting matches, complete with the sullen silences afterwards.

As I learned how to have a real relationship with my dad, I learned that I could have a real relationship with other people based on this principle, too.

When I talk about my opinions, I don't leave a lot of room to talk about my feelings, my hopes, my dreams, my aspirations, my life. I leave room for argument, but not for relating.

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

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Thereafter, I can try to be specific in terms of the hurt or the injury I feel I have suffered and then further specify what it affects in me--pride, self-esteem, security, etc. Further relief is provided when I ask myself what my part in the difficulty has been. Is it my self-centeredness? My competitiveness? My hypersensitivity? Putting a name to my defects--whether it is envy or jealousy--is an important part of this process. And then prayer. Not once, not twice, but often for a week or even two, praying that this person have the same happiness, prosperity, etc., I wish for myself. It is where I ultimately must go for relief.

Though I do try to list my assets and be mindful of resentment, some emotional disturbance cannot be remedied with a simple formula. In a period of marital crisis, followed by separation and ultimately divorce, I struggled with my core fear--abandonment-- and came to understand, through good direction from my sponsor and a therapist, that a terrified child had accompanied me into my adult years, and how that terror had informed some of my objectionable behavior in my home life. I had sought to deny my powerlessness and mask my fear and vulnerability with long stretches of silent scorn or verbal fury.

To access the underlying source of much of my marital pain, I began to write out my inventory in the form of a question-and-answer dialogue between my lower self and higher self. Over time the exercise highlighted the emotional dependency on my mother that had formed in my childhood years and how that had carried over into adult relationships. If the lower self often spoke as a needy, fearful child, the higher self offered comforting, common sense adult perspective. It would remind me that I was no longer back in that family of origin matrix.

With Step Ten, we have entered the world of spirit, and so, inevitably, this Step and Step Eleven are intertwined. Meditation can be like a dredging operation. Buried fears and resentments sometimes rise to the surface and I see what a moment before had been invisible to me.

Step Ten says "when," not "if." Inevitably, I will be in the wrong at some point. That being the case, it is best for me to promptly admit my error. To leave the wrong unaddressed is to allow it to grow and fester. Rationalization, self-justification and rancor thrive the longer I postpone. I may even seek out others to support my "case." And yet, when I become willing to take the simple action required and follow through with an apology or an amend, then I am returned to a state of emotional equilibrium. I have no past or future. I am simply living in the now, where the Higher Power wants me to be. In this regard, an examination of motive is often useful.

"The real war is the war I fight with myself," a man said some years ago. If that is so, then the real victory is over myself and the cruel dictates of my ego: refraining from that face-to-face outburst or waiting 24 hours before dropping that letter in the mailbox. Before letting fly with an oral or written outburst, I can first ask myself these three questions: Is what I say true? Is it kind? Is it necessary? And how many more humiliations must I suffer before I learn to delay hitting the "send" key on a hastily written and inappropriate email?

Journaling may not be a method suitable for everyone. The Steps in large part do become automatic for many of us as we go along, though for me writing is essential as a way of maintaining contact with myself. An inner guide seems to let me know when it is time to put pen to paper. There was a time when I wrote in my journal every day, and perhaps I would be better off if I still did. But now I go to it two or three times a week.

Emotional disturbance can find me at 29 years of recovery as it did when I had 29 minutes. The longer I am sober, the more deeply I am capable of feeling. I have not outgrown fear. I am not so spiritually evolved that I no longer experience resentment.

And sometimes a written inventory is simply to gain clarity on an issue. A simple pros and cons list can do wonders.

Nothing could be sadder than to lose touch with ourselves in recovery: to have our connection to our Higher Power blocked by resentment; to be governed by old ideas we are only dimly, if at all, aware of, and that hold us back; or to be reduced by our fears to living sequestered from life. For the sunlight of the spirit to enter, the window must be kept clean so the light can pour through. It's for me to understand that I can pay to have the windows in my apartment cleaned, but that inner window is one that I must tend to. Sponsors and others can be part of the process, but ultimately it is a task for me to perform.

—David S., New York, N.Y.—

Reprinted from *Grapevine* October 2007 Vol. 0 Issue 0.

Intergroup wants to express our appreciation

for those groups and individuals who have made generous financial contributions, and give a special thank you to all the members who have volunteered their time to help the sick and suffering alcoholic.

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That has been dangerous for me, both inside and outside AA. Arguments usually lead me right back to feelings of isolation, difference, anger, and self-righteousness. These feelings, if left unchecked, could lead me back to a drink if I don't cut out the actions causing them.

I learned in AA of the principle of one alcoholic talking to another in the language of the heart. The logical extension of that principle is talking from the heart, one person to another. To me, this is something I feel I must aim for--it's part of practicing these principles in all of my affairs. And, it allows me to be a giver in terms of my family, my job, and my social affairs rather than expect people in those areas of my life to kowtow to me

Part of the reason this idea has become so important to me is that my dad, with whom I so struggled to be real, died about ten years ago. Fortunately, I'd had about four or five years of practicing relating to him, one person to another. I knew, when he died, that he loved me, even though we still occasionally butted heads. I had taken that leap of faith in AA and practiced talking with him, instead of arguing with him. I am not sure if either he or I would have believed in our love for each other had I avoided this work. By allowing me to have a relationship with him based on love and common ground, my nonalcoholic dad taught me something about AA: I need to have that relation.

—Juliet H., Pinole, California—

Reprinted from *Grapevine* October 2008 Vol. 65 Issue 5.



Sober Halloween Gip #1
Remember you can always call
Your sponsor or a healthy friend,
or go to a meeting.



Sober Hallouseen Gip #2
Be aware of people places and things that are threatening to your sobriety, and make healthy choices to spend time with different people in different places, doing different things.



Sober Halloween Gip #3
Plan to spend time with people
who will have real fun, that
everyone can remember, such as
people who are not drinking.



Sober Halloween Gip #4
If you are heading for an evening out, empower yourself in your recovery, and let the people you are hanging out with know that you will not be drinking.

BROWARD COUNTY INTERGROUP

is having another

OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, October 22, 11a.m. – 4p.m.

DOOR PRIZES * REFRESHMENTS * RAFFLES * DISCOUNTS ON SELECTED ITEMS

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

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.



October Celebrants

Westside Men's

Larry B. ~ 12yrs. Brian A. ~ 11yrs. Joe T. ~ 11vrs.

Meeting in Print

June C. ~ 44yrs. Creig R. ~ 33yrs. Sandy R. ~ 22yrs. Sondra V. ~ 22yrs. Craig G. ~ 31yrs.

Serenity All Together Group

Mark G. ~ 8yrs.

Focus on Sobriety Ginger M. ~ 6yrs.

One Day at a Time Barbara L. ~ 24yrs.

You Are Not Alone

Yolanda ~ 19yrs. Dave M. ~ 7yrs.

Oakland Park

Elizabeth W. ~ 17yrs. Laura O. ~ 4yrs. Mark McC. ~ 26yrs. Will B. ~ 8yrs. Ollie D. ~ 38yrs.

WBC Lunch Bunch

Joe ~ 4yrs. Gerry G. ~ 6yrs. Clark ~ 9yrs. CC ~ 27yrs Cookie ~ 29yrs.

Men in Recovery Jack C. ~ 23yrs.

Pride 5:45

Eric P. ~ 5yrs. Ft. Lauderdale Women's

Laura P. ∼ 2yrs.

Free and Easy Group

Sam B ~ 39yrs. Ted M ~ 37yrs. Melanie S ~ 22yrs.

September Celebrants (not previously submitted)

Express Group

Evangela ~ 5yrs. Shannon ~ 1yr. Marlene ~ 22yr.

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

Thíngs we cannot change,

Вов Д.

He will be missed by all who knew him.

Who published the first edition of the Big Book?

Read the un-circled letters to reveal a hidden message

S G K W H A O P R S E N O K A L S R P P L I O U N T B O R E P V B I K R D G E T I I G E R W S C L I R L I R A S I N S B A H S D M N I I N G H L T N A A K R A P S V I U P R Q P L L I B C H I U T

ALTRUISTIC ANSWER BIG BOOK BILL HANK HUNDRED LIVING PRINCIPLES PROGRAM SHARE STEPS TRADITIONS

BCIC Broward County
Institutions Committee
Next Meeting: October 8th
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
October 16th — November 20th
at 1:00 p.m.

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

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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. Contact us at help@aabroward.org or will@aabroward.org

Room 502 readers tell us about their favorite passages in AA literature

My favorite passage from Alcoholics Anonymous (Page 87-88) "Into Action":

As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day "Thy will be done." We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves.

This passage helps restore my serenity and conscious contact during the day when stressed. That "Pause and prayer" is just what I need, and works every time.

—Bob H., Ft. Lauderdale, FL.—

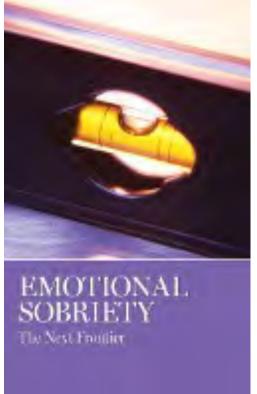
Suite 404 readers tell us about their favorite AA literature

Every alcoholic walking the journey of the Twelve Steps arrives, eventually, at the edge of unchartered territory. Forty five years ago, Bill W. gave this next frontier a name: Emotional sobriety. AAs reporting back from that new terrain, describe a slow development of real maturity and balance as they grow up emotionally and spiritually in the program.

Writers share the harrowing story of what it was like before they found the program. For one alcoholic, it's the awful loneliness of still being alive after hearing the "click" of an unfired gun during a round of Russian Roulette. Another drinks to calm the beast within and winds up behind bars. Out of such dead ends, the AA program is the bridge that leads back to life. And living life on life's terms, for one recovering alcoholic, is the realization that "it's not about me," that getting one's ego out of the way is part of the process of growing up. The pain of an imminent divorce helps another alcoholic come to terms with his need for freedom from dependency and instinctual demands.

For me, emotional sobriety has lead to a sense of emotional maturity. I no longer want to participate in the childish behaviors that lead me to behave in the manner of a selfish, self centered, child.

— Anonymous, Fort Lauderdale —



Room 502 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 or will@aabroward.org

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, Janet M., Elizabeth B., Happiness Is Group, Bobby V., Lillian M., Tim S.. Richard H., Milinda B., Lois O., Richard S., Sam B., Mark S. Barbara S., Douglas C., Jennifer S., Ted K., the other Bob H., Howard S.. Carol B.. June C.. Bob H., Pat R., Leslie R., Eric P., Tara D., Nancy S. 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

Service Opportunities

Broward County Intergroup's 6th Annual

AA's Got Talent Planning Meeting

Planning Meeting: Saturday, October 22nd, Saturday, 1:30pm, 441 Group, 1452 State Road 7, Margate, FL 33063

2018 STATE CONVENTION PLANNING

GRATITUDE DINNER PLANNING

Intergroup Office Will Be Closed: October 3rd for Annual Inventory

MEETING CHANGES

Monday

NEW MEETING Women's Open House, 8:30p.m., 101 Club, 700 SW 10th St. & Dixie Hwy., Pompano, FL. 33060. OBBw

Tuesday

<u>By The Book</u>, 7:30p.m., St. Francis Mission., 208 SE 8th Street, Fort Lauderdale, **Has Moved to** Christ Community Church, 901 E. McNab Rd., Pompano, FL. 33060

NEW MEETING Spiritual Beginners, 8:30p.m., Christ Community Church, 901 E McNab Rd., Pompano Beach, FL 33060 OSPD.

Wednesday

NEW MEETING <u>The Harbor Group,</u> 8:00p.m., Sober Today Club, 1633 S.21st Ave., Hollywood, 33020

NEW MEETING Men Of Integrity, 8:30p.m., Fellowship Recovery Center, 5400 W. Atlantic Blvd. Margate, FL 33063 OCCM.

NEW MEETING <u>Atlantic Woman's Group,</u> 5:45p.m., Fellowship Recovery Center, 5400 W. Atlantic Blvd. Margate, FL 33063 CRFw.

Eastside Back To Basics, 7:00p.m., Christ Comm. Church, 901 E McNab Rd., Pompano.

<u>Living Young & Sober,</u> 7:30p.m., The Hope Spot, 218 Dania Bch. Blvd., Dania, **Has Moved to** The Sanctuary, 1400 N Federal Hwy., Ft. Lauderdale, FL. 33304

<u>Open Arms,</u> 7:30p.m., Mount Olive Baptist, 401 NW 9th Ave., Fort Lauderdale, **Has Moved to** Delevoe Park, 2520 NW 6th St., Ft. Lauderdale, FL. 33311

Friday

<u>Perry Street South.</u> 7:00p.m., ProAm Building, 1915 NE 45 St., Ft. Lauderdale, **Has Added A New Night** It will meet two nights now. Tuesday at 7:00p.m., and now, Friday at 7:00p.m.

Saturday

NEW MEETING <u>Doing The Deal.</u> 7:30p.m., Fellowship Recovery Center, 5400 W. Atlantic Blvd. Margate, FL <u>Saturday Night Sobriety</u>, 7:00p.m., Kiwanis Park, 520 Ramblewood Rd, Coral Springs, **No longer meets.**

Sunday

Sunday Night As Bill Sees It, 6:30p.m., Kiwanis Park, 520 Ramblewood Rd, Coral Springs, No longer meets.

<u>Options Group.</u>:5:30p.m., Luther Memorial Church, 1925 N 60th Ave., Hollywood, **No longer meets.**<u>Good Morning God.</u> 10:00a.m., Tae Kwan do, Sun Village Plaza, 4577 N. University, Lauderhill, **Has Moved to,** Unity Room, (Old Sunrise Room) 4525 N Pine Island Rd., Sunrise, FL. 33324

12 & 12 Group, :8:00p.m. Tuesday & 7:30p.m., Friday, Sober Today Club, 1633 S.21st Ave., Hollywood, No longer meets.

Upcoming Events

- Oct. 15 District 9 Archive Committee's Early Timers' Meeting, featuring three speakers with over 25 years sobriety. Coffee and dessert 5:00 p.m., meeting at 7:00 p.m. This is a free event. NSU Terry Building, Steele Auditorium, 3200 S. University Dr.,
- Oct. 22 Broward County Intergroup's Open House, Saturday, 11a.m.- 4p.m.

 DOOR PRIZES * REFRESHMENTS * RAFFLES * DISCOUNTS ON SELECT ITEMS, 3317 NW 10th Terrace, Suite 404 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309. Located near I-95 and Oakland Park Blvd.
- Nov. 3-6 10th International Conference, Seniors in Sobriety, Bahia Resort Hotel, San Diego, California. For more info check website, www.seniorsinsobriety.org.
- Nov. 11 District 9 53rd Gratitude Dinner, Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, 5555 N. Federal Hwy, Ft. Lauderdale. Coffee at 5, Dinner at 6, Speaker at 7:30. Tickets \$15.00 All proceeds to benefit the General Service Office in New York.
- **Feb. 4 6th Annual AAs Got Talent,** Coral Springs Charter School, \$10.00. Adults only.