

Suite 404

BROWARD COUNTY INTERGROUP, INC.

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VOLUME 5 MAY 2019

Step Five - "Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."

Building an Arch

I first heard about Step Five from my sponsor. He had recently taken his. It didn't sound like fun. Not being one to suffer alone, my sponsor's immediate reaction to his own "spiritual house cleaning" was to launch me upon a Fourth Step. He wanted to give away what he'd received. I thought, What happened to "this is a selfish program?"

Step Four took a very long time. At all of it I balked. I thought I could find an easier, softer way, but I could not. With all the earnestness at his command, my sponsor became cunning, baffling, and powerful, constantly reminding me that half measures availed me nothing. I hated him.

The day finally came when even I had to admit that I'd completed Step Four to the best of my ability. That's what had me so upset. The best of my ability didn't look so hot in those days. I called my sponsor to tell him I'd finished, expecting to take a six-month to one-year sabbatical from the Steps after this arduous trek into my life. That's when he lowered the boom. "Great," he said. "The best time to take the Fifth Step is right after you finish the Fourth. Meet me at my home tomorrow at six."

Son of a gun! Who do you think you are? I thought, but aloud, I said, "Okay, I'll be there."

I hung up the phone and said to myself, "I bet Bill W. didn't have to go through this!" I used to think the Big Book referred to Step Five when it said, "What an order! I can't go through with it." I thought, How can talking about all this junk that I never wanted to write down in the first place make any difference?

By the time I finished Step Five, I knew that I was well on my way toward "building an arch" through which I would "walk a free man." What happened? Did God convert me into a religious AA dervish? Was I brainwashed by some mystical technique into an AA true believer? Did I go into permanent shock? None of these things happened. The truth is much simpler. Step Five simply accomplished exactly what I was promised, based on the tried and tested experience of Alcoholics Anonymous.

This is what happened. For starters, I had prepared for Step Five by making a beginning on the previous Steps. I had my Fourth Step inventory which had given me a new awareness, albeit a not completely objective one. Nevertheless, I had it. Though the temptation to avoid sharing with "another human being" was nearly overwhelming, my fear of not following my sponsor's instructions to the letter was even greater.

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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.

(Continued on pg. 4)

Tradition Five - "Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers."

Anything and Everything Except Sobriety

Tradition Five - Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

By its own definition, the primary purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous is "to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety." Are we what we say we are, or are we becoming a bunch of phonies? Have our egos let us believe we are something we are not?

Yes, I know that AA is changing in a changing world. Yes, I know that old-timers like me may be out of touch with what's going on in the world around me. Yes, I realize that the AA program has been incredibly useful and helpful in solving many other problems in living. After all, who could miss the trendy message of those who belong to more twelve-step programs than anyone else in the room? So, does that make me a bleeding-deacon, voicing alarm for the good of the cause? Or do my observations originate in a valid fear that my lifeline is being eroded?

Increasingly, I find that "problems other than alcohol" are consuming more and more of the focus of meetings in various areas. In Oregon, pot smoking, drugs, sex problems, and family relationships are the principle topics—and they are usually personal rather than general. Individuals are told to share their problems at meetings. This is then the topic for discussion, often followed by all sorts of advice. In Arizona where I spend the winter, the focus is on testifying for what Jesus has done. The "primary purpose of the group" seems to be bringing sober AA members to Christ. A few "spiritual leaders" use meeting time to compare portions of the AA Big Book to passages in the Holy Bible, calling it "the Big Big Book."

It is sad to see some incredibly spiritual Native Americans pushed away because they don't embrace the predominant religious viewpoint. Having been vocal about pointing out page 34 in *As Bill Sees It*, I found myself shunned as a heretic who doesn't understand the AA program. That page contains the following excerpt from a 1954 letter by Bill W.:

"While AA has restored thousands of poor Christians to their churches, and has made believers out of atheists and agnostics, it has also made good AAs out of those belonging to the Buddhist, Islamic, and Jewish faiths. For example, we question very much whether our Buddhist members in Japan would ever have joined this Society had AA officially stamped itself a strictly Christian movement.

"You can easily convince yourself of this by imagining that AA started among the Buddhists and that they then told you you couldn't join them unless you became a Buddhist, too. If you were a Christian alcoholic under these circumstances, you might well turn your face to the wall and die."

The suggestion to close a meeting with the noncontroversial Serenity Prayer instead of the popular Christian Lord's Prayer brought horror to many in the group. One Native American, sober three years, found he could not stay sober under the pressure.

I have no fear about AA surviving this. I know that there will always be a couple of drunks sitting around someone's kitchen table with a pot of coffee and a Big Book, talking about sobriety--though finding such underground groups may be difficult.

So what is my concern? Well, it seems to me that the long form of the Twelve Traditions sets it out fairly clearly. Without AA unity my personal recovery may be in jeopardy. There is no question in my mind that for me to drink is to die. I definitely want to stay alive and be able to carry my own keys.

At the same time, to stay sober, I'm trying to cease fighting anyone or anything. Conflict destroys my personal happiness. The AA program and the Twelve Traditions provide a framework for living, one that makes room for differences in personalities and personal preferences--without having to go to the barricades to defend who is right. In AA it doesn't matter who is right--only who is left! I want to be able to be around for a while longer.

But how about the newcomers? What happens when they get told that AA is something it's not? It's not a place to solve domestic family issues. It's not a place to get advice on how to keep your Lithium dosage in balance. It's not a place to learn how to beat the system on drunk driving charges. And, perhaps more significantly, it's not a place to learn how to find Buddha in your liver or Jesus in your heart.

When an AA group conscience loses its primary purpose of staying sober and helping other alcoholics achieve sobriety, is it still an AA group? Does "majority rule" allow an influx of individuals with "Christian hangovers" to change the primary purpose of AA in their area? I never thought it could or would.

Recovery Word Puzzle

SPINOONI
ABALTSBICA
NEEDMOCDN
TIGERONAI
DEERDO
ETHRICE



ROFEKMARW
CENTISGE
FOODNURP
CAPSLIMONOCTI
NUTROIE
LERCSAU

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

(continued from page 2)

Since 1951, I've watched AA transcend barriers of nationality, race, culture, and religion. The bottle never demanded credentials or conformity--neither has AA. Now I observe changes occurring--trendy popular changes that appear to divert from AA's stated and primary purpose. Frankly, it frightens me.

At my age, I can probably make the rest of the trip without undue difficulty. However, I concern myself with those that follow. I have an eight-year-old granddaughter who, if genetics is a factor in alcoholism, is a sitting target for the disease. What will her chances be? Will she one day go to a gathering calling itself an AA meeting and find anything and everything except sobriety?

It is my hope that when AA members call themselves an AA group, they won't create a second requirement for membership. Then our singleness of purpose and our common welfare can prevail. I feel fairly confident this will happen if members of AA will read what is in the basic text for recovery--the AA Big Book. The answers will come. Especially if they practice that slogan, unpopular to some, but important to all: "Think, Think, Think."

---Ken W., Bandon, OR

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Volunteer Opportunities

FOUNDERS' DAY PICNIC planning meetings

Skyline Chili, 2834 N University Drive, Sunrise - Wednesday, May 8th at 7 PM Denny's, 3151 NW 9th Avenue, Ft. Lauderdale - Wednesday, May 22nd at 7 PM

2019 Gratitude Dinner, to be held in November, has the next planning meeting SUNDAY, MAY 26th at 1:30 PM
Lambda South Club, 1231 E. Las Olas Blvd., Ft. Lauderdale

Pick up a commitment today!!

SERVICE KEEPS YOU SOBER



(Continued from page 1)

I arrived at my sponsor's home promptly at six. I didn't want to be late for my "funeral." He ushered me into the living room, and I sat in what was obviously the condemned man's chair. Given to redundancies in times of hysteria, I commented on the weather at least twice, and God only knows how many times I mentioned the state of local AA affairs. Then my sponsor said those terrible words: "Why don't you get out your Fourth Step so we can get started."

I feared that doors automatically sealed themselves during Fifth Steps. But I prayed to God and "asked His protection and care with complete abandon." "Okay, where do you want to begin?" I asked, hoping for mercy. "Why don't we begin with your grudge list," my sponsor said. "But before we begin," he added, "why don't we pray and ask our Higher Power for guidance. After all, this is a three-way deal. God is very much a part of this. It's his grace that brought you here."

Sometimes sponsors can really surprise you. This was one of those rare times. We prayed, then he became his old self again, indicating that it was time I began. We went over my grudge list, item by item. I discovered that he liked "item by item." I read and explained. He listened and commented.

Before we were halfway through the list, I began to realize that the advice, counseling, and experience he shared was not only his, but that of others as well. It was the experience of one drunk talking to another, but it was more than that. It was the resonating voices of countless men and women in AA who had shared their experience, strength, and hope with each other. Was this God-consciousness? I wondered, as I continued my disclosures.

Finishing the grudge list, we assailed my list of fears. To my surprise, I discovered my sponsor and I shared some of the same ones. By this time, occasional laughter interspersed the more serious portions of the unfolding panorama of my life. I was beginning to feel a sense of relief. It continued to grow even as we discussed pertinent aspects of my "list of major human failings--the Seven Deadly Sins."

It was incredible! As years of humiliation, pride, and fear fell away into harmless debris, my sense of isolation actually began to dissipate. I no longer felt like a freak, a pathetic caricature of humanity, incapable of integrating myself into the world about me. The existence of God's presence was no theory; it was fact. God was with us and my cup did indeed run over. It overflowed with his love as it was translated into the experience, strength, and hope of two twentieth-century alcoholics joined in the miracle of a spiritual awakening known as recovery.

Those secrets that I'd sworn to take to my grave were now dead and buried under the fertile soil of a new freedom nurtured by truth and sharing and laughter, moistened by tears of relief and joy, and warmed by the sunlight of the spirit. "Step Five works! It really does," I marvelled. I knew now that the man who was leaving was not the same man who had fearfully entered this Fifth-Step sanctuary just a few hours previously.

Today, after many revisits to Step Five, I know that my initial experience was no fluke, that "God does move in a mysterious way His wonders to perform," and that Step Five is one of those.

I have also been privileged to share in the Fifth Step experiences of others. Since there is nothing like personal experience to qualify one for this extremely personal spiritual awakening, I would suggest having done a Fifth Step as a prerequisite for hearing someone else's. We must be prepared to share our own Fifth Step disclosures, laughter, and tears that the experience of others might be as profound as our own. Being able to keep confidential the disclosures of others is also essential. This experience is only between God and ourselves.

Franklin D. Roosevelt said, in his first inaugural address, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." If we're willing to expose the pages of our lives to the love and understanding of our Higher Power and a fellow alcoholic, we'll surely know a new freedom and a new happiness We'll discover that love is never having to feel alone again; that God's presence in our lives has become profound; and that the unity of the Fellowship of the spirit can be ours so long as we are willing to "pass it on."

-- Chico C., West Palm Beach, Florida

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AA BIRTHDAY'S

May Celebrants

Serenity Altogether Express Group

David H. ~ 7 yrs. Ron J. ~ 35 yrs.

Tough Love

MaryJo W. ∼ 33 yrs.

Ft. Lauderdale Women's

Judy J. ∼ 14 yrs.

Women's Step Into Sobriety

Casandra C. ~ 5 vrs.

Broward Men's

Sebastian ~ 4 yrs.

Then and Now

Tim S. ~ 36 yrs.

Freedom From Alcohol

Jackie S. ∼ 37 yrs.

Bobby ~ 7 yrs. Geri ~ 10 yrs.

Sober Sisters

Jan S. ~ 34 yrs. Jen ~ 10 yrs. Karen L. ~ 10 yrs.

5:45 Happy Hour

Linden ~ 33 yrs.

Friends of Joe

Larry F. ~ 26 yrs.

Coral Ridge Group Jodi W. ~ 18 yrs.

Saturday Morning **Awareness**

Joey B. ~ 7 yrs.

Plantation Happy Hour

Keith N. ~ 4 yrs. Lou P. ~ 19 yrs. Peggy D. ~ 14 yrs. Robin S. ~ 25 yrs. Howard S. ~ 4 yrs.

Happy Destiny

Sheila C. ~ 25 yrs.

We Came To Stay-32 yrs.

Meditation at the Rock Mary R. ~ 13 yrs.

Sunshine Group

Donna H. ~ 10 yrs. Dave A. ~ 7 yrs.

Other Notables

Aisling ~ 20 yrs. Christopher C. ~ 13 yrs. Gail O. ~ 36 yrs. Jeff S. ~ 30 yrs. Rob D. ~ 10 yrs. Dave S. ~ 23 yrs. Russell S. ~ 30 yrs.



Amanda P. ~ 6 yrs. Victoria R. ~ 9 yrs. BRIDGING

THE GAP

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.)

has a new number

724-680-0430

BCIC - Broward County **Institutions Committee**

Next Meeting: May 11th - 10:00 a.m.

Twelve Step House

205 SW 23rd St., Ft. Lauderdale

April Celebrants

not previously mentioned

Sober Sisters

Bernadette ~ 1 yr.

Thursday Night Big **Book Study**

Teddy ~ 4 yrs.

Saturday Morning <u>Awareness</u>

Dan P. ~ 2 yrs. Nancy R. ~ 12 yrs.

441 Group

Laura S. ~ 2 yrs. Amanda T. ~ 18 yrs.

Sober on the Beach

Jeremy R. ~ 1 yr.

Live Laugh Love

Evonne L. ~ 6 yrs.l

Just For Today

Casey ~ 6 yrs.

No. Lauderdale Back to **Basics**

Joe ~ 20 yrs.

Women's Honesty Justine ~ 5 yrs.

Golden Text Group

Meghan ~ 1 yr.

Mandee ~ 1 yr.

Yale ~ 1 yr.

Charles ~ 1 yr.

Marisa ~ 2 yrs.

Kenny ~ 3 yrs.

Tammi Jo ~ 8 yrs.



Next **Intergroup Meeting**

Twelve Step House

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

SUNDAY, May 19th at 1:00 p.m.

Local Readers Share......

The month of May will always have a special place in my heart. Literally! After my second sleepless night from coughing, I drove myself to Broward Health. It was 4 a.m. on May 7th when I walked into the lobby of the emergency room and stated, "I'm having a heart attack!"

The receptionist asked, "How do you know?"

"I Googled it," I responded. "And, I have all the symptoms....tight chest, constant coughing and shortness of breath." (Did you know heart attacks will get you to the front of the line?)

After an EKG, they discovered I was in cardiac arrest. I was admitted with acute myocardial infarction. It's a life -threatening condition that occurs when blood flow to the heart is abruptly cut off, causing tissue damage. I was placed on an extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) system, an advanced life-support technique for patients in my condition. Immediately, I started thanking God for the physicians he was about to put in my life, for my insurance, and for all the attention I was about to get.

With tears running down his face, my roommate Richard W. gave daily updates on my status, and asked everyone to pray for me at our home group of Victor E. Suzie V. was so the go-to-gal on social media and kept my family and friends in the loop. At the Salvation Army, Major Hudson lifted my name in prayer at devotion daily and at chapel. There were people praying for me that I didn't even know. The power of prayer saw me through the double bypass surgery, life-support and the complications afterwards. My heart was so sick, there were talks of me getting on the donor list for a new heart, so they transferred me south, where they were better equipped to handle situations like mine.

On May 9th, I awoke at Miami's Jackson Memorial Health, with my big brother Terry praying by my bedside. I knew something was wrong if he was praying, because he's an atheist. Seeing him pray brought me back to when we were 3 and 4 years old praying before bed; just the way our grandmother taught us to. On a recent phone conversation, I asked him if he prayed for me when I was sick. To my surprise, he said yes. He began praying after he received the call saying that I was on life-support. No one was prepared for that. After all, I was just having routine heart surgery. Did it take me dying in the O.R. to give my brother some hope or belief in a power stronger than himself?

I used to be like my brother, praying out of fear. Prayer is different for me today. Over the past 4 years, I have worked the 12 steps twice with 2 different sponsors. Once Richard got me through steps 2 and 3, I became willing to do the work. The 11th step keeps me in tune with God all the time. I am so blessed to have had Richard W. and Gus G. enter my life. No matter what the issue, they both tell me to pray about it. When I have difficulties, I can pray about it. When things are going well, I give thanks to my Higher Power. The only things Gus asks are that I produce a daily gratitude list, and help another alcoholic. Prayer keeps me in the moment of celebrating May 9th every day of the year. When you think about it, we are all miracles....even my brother Terry, who only prays when he's scared. Progress, not perfection, right?

---clw, Ft. Lauderdale

Thank you to everyone who came out to Tropical Acres and supported Intergroup at our Annual Appreciation Banquet! It was a wonderful evening of fellowship.

We want to express a special thanks to the groups who contributed a gift for our Raffle:

Women's Honesty
Easier Softer Way
Women's Step by Step
Imperial Point Group
Sunshine Group
Each Day a New Beginning
Men's Independence

Sober Sisters
Free To Be Group
Surrender Group
Riverside Group
Davie Women's Group
Spiritual Principles
Splinter Group

Downtown Drydock Women's Step Into Sobriety Brothers All Living Life Sober Into Action Group Victor E Group Happy Destiny Pompano Young People Plantation Happy Hour Freedom From Alcohol Dania After Work Group Early Risers Group Sunlight of the Spirit Midday Sobriety Living in the Solution

The raffle raised over \$3000—the most ever!! (If anyone who contributed is not included here, we apologize)

ASL OFFERED at the following meetings:

Tuesday in Pembroke Pines: Surrender Group Wednesday in Hollywood: Happy Destiny (women's) Wednesday in Ft. Lauderdale: Secular and Sober



Things we cannot change.....

Roz A.

She will be missed. May she Rest in Peace.

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.

Faithful Fivers are A.A. members who donate five dollars (\$5) a month to Intergroup as an act of gratitude. Their generosity helps us to carry the message of A.A. to the still sick and suffering alcoholic throughout the year.

Thank you to our Faithful Fivers. Your contributions are so appreciated!

Tom & Liz J., Gregory C., Suzanne J., Bob H., Anonymous I, Elizabeth B., Ron J., Tim S., Lois O., Richard H., Jennifer S., Pat R., Beth D., Craig G., Sandy P., Leo H., Vickie T., Howie K., Kerry W., Lewis G., James H., Joanne D., Gerry B., Don W., Eric P., Tara D., Denise J., Howard S., Bob D., Robert H., Sally S., Anonymous II, Jane T., Fran C., Peter S., Deborah C., Women's Step by Step and Rachel L.

	onsider becoming a <i>"Faithful Fiver."</i> Your commitment of \$5.00 a month to your Intergroup Office will go a ong 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	·
Addre	ss:
Email:	
	ety Date and Home Group
	checks payable to: Broward County Intergroup, Inc., 3317 NW 10th Terrace, Suite 404, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309
	D PUZZLE: opinions, sabbatical, condemned, originate, eroded, heretic, framework, genetics, profound, complica- e, secular
IAMR	ESPONSIBLE
	HEN ANYONE, ANYWHERE, REACHES OUT FOR HELP, VANT THE HAND OF A.A. ALWAYS TO BE THERE. AND FOR THAT: I AM RESPONSIBLE.
NAME: _	GENDER:
PHONE:	EMAIL:
PREFER:	VOICE: TEXT: EMAIL: CITY OF RESIDENCE:
WILL CA	LL BACK: AND/OR PAY A VISIT:
AVAILAI	BILITY: MONDAY to FRIDAY: WEEKENDS:
8:00am-12	2:00pm 12:00pm-5:00pm 5:00pm-9:00pm 9:00pm-8:00am
TO CO	MPLETE A 12-STEP CALL, you only need to be sober one day, but you NEVER GO ALONE.

SEND COMPLETED FORM TO: help@aabroward.org

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!

MEETING CHANGES

Tuesday

NEW MEETING On Sober Grounds meets upstairs from Underground Coffeehaus, 3020 N. Federal Hwy., Ft. Lauderdale. 7 PM, OD.

Russian Speaking Meeting of S.FL which met at Twelve Step House in Ft. Lauderdale NO LONGER MEETS. **NEW MEETING** Lit-tur-ture Lambda South Club, 1231 E. Las Olas Blvd., rear entry, Ft. Lauderdale, OBBg, 8:30 AM.

Wednesday

NEW MEETING Spiritual Carport West Broward Club, 8396 State Rd.84, Davie, 10 PM, ORF.

Out of the Woods which met at the 101 Club in Pompano NO LONGER MEETS.

Thursday

NEW MEETING <u>Lit-tur-ture</u> Lambda South Club, 1231 E. Las Olas Blvd., rear entry, Ft. Lauderdale, OSTg, 8:30 AM.

Atlantic Women's Group which meets in Margate is changing their time from 5:45 PM to 5:30 PM.

Friday

NEW MEETING <u>Friday Night Live</u> West Broward Club, 8396 State Rd.84, Davie, 10 PM, Open Discussion **NEW MEETING** <u>Wild West Group</u> meets at West Pine Community Church, 21113 Johnson St., Pembroke Pines, 11 AM. OCC.

<u>Perry Street South</u> which met in Wilton Manors NO LONGER MEETS on Fridays.

Saturday

NEW MEETING <u>The 12 & 12 at 12</u> Twelve Step House, 205 SW 23 Street, Ft. Lauderdale, 6 PM, OSTR. <u>Late Night by Candlelight</u> which meets at Lambda South in Fort Lauderdale will now meet at 10 PM. <u>Sober on Saturday Night</u> that meets at Sober Today Club in Hollywood changed the start time to 5:30 PM. <u>Harbor Group</u> that meets at Sober Today Club in Hollywood changed the start time to 7:30 PM.

Sunday

<u>Sobriety in the Springs</u> that met at Kiwanis Park in Coral Springs NO LONGER MEETS on Sundays.

NEW MEETING <u>Halfway to the Next Step</u> 1855 NE 53rd St., Pompano, 7:30 PM, OSPm - on patio outside.

DAILY MEETINGS

NEW MEETING You're Off the Hook West Broward Club, 8396 State Rd. 84, Davie. Mon-Fri 5:30 PM, ORF.



ALL NEW Look on WEBSITE COMING SOON

Upcoming Events

- May 4 District 9 Archives Old Timers Meeting Hull Auditorium, NSU, Davie—free event. Coffee and dessert 5-6:30 PM, followed by 3 speakers with 35+ years of sobriety. Full archives display. Please bring a newcomer and a dessert to share.
- May 9 Big Book Seminar 2019 in the spirit of Joe and Charlie. Boca Raton Marriott, 5150 Town
 Center Circle, Boca Raton. For more info and to register online go to https://bigbookseminar.org
- May 19- AA Seniors in Sobriety 12th International Conference, Reno-Tahoe, NV. For more info call
 - **21** 775.399.4627 or go to sisreg2019@gmail.com
- **Founder's Day Picnic** hosted by District 9 General Service. Snyder Park, 3299 SW 4th Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, 11 AM— 4 PM. Live DJ, Line Dancing, Games, Volleyball and Horseshoes, A.A. Meeting at 2 PM. Tickets \$8 in advance and \$10 at park for lunch, kids under 7 eat free. Bring a dessert and a newcomer. Parking fees \$1 per hour or \$5/day.
- July 31- 63rd Florida State Convention will be in Miami. Get registered today at
 - Aug 4 63.FloridaStateConvention.com