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Step Eight - "Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all."

Amends without Thinking

Years of hatred melt away as a son forgives his alcoholic father

I didn't think that I could ever find a way to forgive my father for what he had done to me. Even my sponsor didn't see a solution, except to learn to let it go and, in time, find peace in spite of the memories.

My father died four years before I came to AA. He was living in a \$25-a-week room and pumping gas for a few dollars, just barely enough to live on. He had two degrees from an Ivy League college and had slid all the way down to rock bottom. His tolerance for booze had also declined to where he could only force down one ounce every few hours. His right arm was paralyzed and almost all of his teeth were gone. He had a distended belly and a beard that hid the pallor of his skin. The last time I saw him was three months before he died and I remember drinking enough to stay numb just so I could tolerate his presence. I think I was seeing a picture of my own future.

My brother, sister and I grew up on a farm on the eastern shore of Maryland. We actually had two farms, a 300-plus-acre farm that was a working farm and a smaller 50-acre farm where we lived. Farm life wasn't easy, and we had lots of chores to do. Even with all the work, there was still time to explore the fields, woods, marshes and river. I spent a lot of time creating my own fantasy world. The farm was a great place for a kid living in a dream world. I would run away and hide in one of my secret places, just to get away from the violence that could erupt in our house.

My father was a hardworking person. He would leave every morning before sunup to go to our other farm and wouldn't return until supper. He would come home, pour himself a stiff one and set it on the piano. He would also have his newspaper and ashtray there as well. He would play "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho" with one hand and drink, smoke and turn the pages of the newspaper with the other. I remember being very impressed that he could do all that, and secretly I wanted to be like him. Every once in a while something would make him angry and he would come after me. I would try to escape to one of my hiding places, but I didn't always make it.

His method of teaching table manners was to kick your shins with his steel-toed work boot or hit your knuckles with the broad side of the carving knife. I learned much later that there is a period between not enough booze and too much booze where a person can become overwhelmed with anger. My father was angry most of the time, and his anger would usually rain down on the nearest person. Of the three kids, I was his favorite target. Most of the time the punishment was just a quick strike, but there were times when it was more severe.

One summer morning, when I was 10 or 11, my brother, sister and I were arguing over something when a rock arrived at my feet. I was reaching down for the rock, but before I could pick it up, a big hand grabbed my wrist and dragged me behind the garage. My father stripped off my shorts

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Concept VIII

The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance.

They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.

Tradition Eight - "Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers."

Tradition Eight: A Clear Distinction

A counselor celebrates the difference between work and recovery

Observations in the Big Book and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* about what power drivers and self-promoters alcoholics are have always mystified me. With our district and area service positions frequently going vacant for months, I've always suspected that alkie and organization don't mix. Outsiders might even theorize that alcoholism engenders some neurologically-based grudge toward rank and bureaucracy.

My sober friends in AA—including accomplished professionals—seem more attracted to helping newcomers one-on-one than embracing AA's larger service structure. A new experience helps me underscore the positive in this preference.

As a recent graduate of a university counseling program and a newcomer to the treatment field, I'm now getting a real education in the trade-offs of "professionalizing" care. I recently completed a six-hour workshop the state offers clinicians who provide evaluation and treatment to DUI offenders. The workshop focused entirely on completing paperwork the state requires for reimbursement and accountability. And that was only the beginning.

Given the time and expense, not all alkie will wade through that battery of questions. Many abandon the process midstream. Even many clinicians, sober alcoholics themselves, demonstrate impatience with the red tape.

Can you blame us? We know well that personal interrogation—listing age, race, employment, income, arrests, days abstinent, drug(s) of choice listed in order of preference with frequency and levels of use and routes of administration, affected family members, domestic violence, resulting health problems, sexual orientation, and so on—never got us or anybody else sober.

This is not a rant against government. The state has a vested interest in keeping drunks off the roads. In fact, state employees were funny, warm, wholly understanding, and apologetic for the emotional and ethical dilemmas created by the sheaf of papers they expect us to wade through. They encouraged us to call whenever we have questions or need help. They were trusted servants, albeit paid ones, living life and working on life's terms.

As the workshop dragged on, a phrase from Tradition Nine came to mind and repeated itself incessantly: "AA, as such, ought never be organized . . ."

A big "amen" to that was all I could think after six hours. I shook the cobwebs from my brain, thanked the state employees, and headed for the door.

During the two-hour drive home, I daydreamed about ditching red tape, quitting my job, and living again off borrowed money, food stamps, and the strained generosity of others. I set my automatic pilot straight for a regular Step meeting and arrived just in time to hear a sober friend read the long form of Tradition Ten that assured me we wouldn't discuss politics, religion, or reform laws about alcohol.

What a relief! I may be a professional in the field, but I'm also a sober alcoholic, and I'd heard more about administration, the law, and proper procedure than I could handle for one day.

If this had occurred when I was newly sober, I easily imagined the old me buttoning up my shabby trench coat of resentment, self-pity, defiance, fear, and egotism, blowing off the interview mid-sentence, and heading for the nearest package store. Keep the driver's license, the old me would have said. I'd rather walk so that I can drink in peace.

The founders who hammered out our Traditions on the anvils of their sometimes chaotic experience understood well what it meant to "professionalize" work that might be more spirited and effective without compensation, documentation, accountability, and oversight boards. And so, thankfully, Alcoholics Anonymous isn't in the business of brokering licenses, jobs, marriages, welfare, health care, or legal battles.

We may know it when we see it, but who among us could document an alcoholic's true recovery: the return of self, body, mind, spirit? The return of gratitude and a keen appetite for living? Who could sign the forms to certify that one more sober alcoholic, with the help of others, and by the loving grace of his or her Higher Power, had received the unmerited gift of living one more sober day? And who would we empower to insure that such records were in keeping with the hand of Providence?

Count me as one more professional in the field who couldn't survive my job without a meeting, a simple program, AA literature, sober friends, and a mighty good life to return to by day's end. The records of this recovery are written in my heart. May they remain an open account to the loving God of my limited, but growing, understanding.

Recovery Word Puzzle

SCOREDTRI
REELTAOT
SCITNODNIIT
TEASTIBNN
MARDHEEM
NEERPSEC



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

FRODLEESOC
MATEETNRT
STEEMTERNN
CETMIOEMT
BUSTTROCININO
LOSERSPENBI

Volunteer Opportunities

44th Annual Intergroup Picnic will have their next planning meeting

Sunday, August 18 at 2 PM (following Intergroup meeting)

Twelve Step House, 215 SW 23 Street, Fort Lauderdale

District 9 Archives is planning for the **Early Timers Meeting** to be held in October

Saturday, August 24th at 2:00 PM

at the 441 Group, 1452 N State Rd. 7, Margate, FL 33063

District 9 Spaghetti Dinner is having 2 planning meetings in August on **Wednesdays at 7PM**

August 7, Skyline Chili - 2834 N. University Drive, Sunrise 33322

August 21, Denny's Restaurant - 3151 NW 9th Ave., Ft. Lauderdale 33309

District 9 General Service is hosting the **Quarterly Area Assembly in October**

Planning meeting is Tuesday, August 20th at 6:30 PM

Hidden Woods at Deer Creek Clubhouse, 207 Deer Creek Blvd., Deerfield Beach

2019 Gratitude Dinner, to be held in November, has the next planning meeting on

Sunday, August 25th at 1:30 PM

at the Sober Today Club, 1633 S 21st Avenue, Hollywood, FL

Pick up a commitment today!!

SERVICE KEEPS YOU SOBER



(continued from page 1)

and spread me out against the wall. He then took off his leather belt, doubled it, and hit my backside hard. I began to cry. The next thing he said, which were the last words that I heard that day, was: "Men don't cry," and he continued the beating until I passed out. The next thing I remember was waking up in my own bed, covered with bloody cotton batting that had been soaked in witch hazel. My lower back and butt felt like they were on fire. I managed to get dressed and went down stairs to find my family at the dinner table. I sat down in my seat and even though the pain was killing me, I wasn't about to let anyone know that I was in agony. No one said anything then or since about that day. That beating left me with some welts under the skin that were constant reminders and fueled my hatred. That wasn't the last violence I experienced, but it was the one that started the hatred that lasted well past my father's death and into the first few years of my recovery. When he died, I felt cheated because I hadn't killed him myself.

In late summer of 1978, alcohol brought me to my knees and almost cost me my life. I had become the same as the person I hated the most. He was 61 when he died, and I was dying in my late 30s. Fortunately for me, I accepted the help that AA offered and have been sober ever since. My father turned it down because there was too much God in it for him. I was introduced to the Twelve Steps within the first couple of weeks and did what was suggested. By following a few simple suggestions, I have been spared the final agony of active alcoholism that several other members of my family have experienced.

When I reached the Eighth Step, I discussed the list with my sponsor. He first asked whom I had left off, and we added two names. Then, he reviewed the names on my list with me and discussed whether they should or shouldn't be there. When we got to my father's name, we discussed the reasons for and against and admittedly there were not a lot of reasons to put him on the list. But there was something nagging me inside. I wasn't going to experience peace unless I did something. Neither one of us knew what to do, but we decided to leave his name on the list. We left it up to God to direct me. All I asked was that I remain willing to do as directed.

A year or two later I was in the back of our church guiding the junior ushers in their jobs when a member of the vestry approached me and asked if I would like to make a donation to the organ fund. I said yes, wrote out a check and handed it to her. Before she turned away, she asked if I would like to make the donation in anyone's name. Without any thought at all, I said, "Yes, please accept it in my father's name." Before alcohol had become part of my father's life, he had sung in an all-boys choir. He sang lead soprano even through his voice change, and his favorite instrument was the organ. I continued working with the kids and didn't think anything about what had just transpired.

It wasn't until a week later, while leading a meeting on the Ninth Step, when I suddenly realized what had happened. I had forgiven my father for all the things he had done to me and made amends to him just as I had prayed for. I had done it without thinking.

I was unable to continue with the lead and had to pass it off to someone else. After the meeting I went home to absorb what had just happened. I stayed up quite late that night reflecting on all the past miseries that both my father and I had experienced. All those terrible events just seemed to melt away. They weren't that important anymore. All the hatred disappeared. I could see quite clearly what had happened to both of us. Active alcoholism had robbed from us any chance of a healthy relationship. It robbed us from ourselves.

As the bad memories were peeled away, one pleasant memory was revealed. On a hot summer evening when I was about 7 years old, my father and I were rolling around on the ground laughing and having a wonderful time together, because there were 13 English setter puppies crawling all over both of us. I can still hear and feel it today. It is the one happy memory I have left of my father and me together, and I wouldn't trade it for anything.

As the emotions began to subside I reached down my back to feel the welts, and they were gone as well. I no longer had the physical scars from the terrible past. Whether they left as a result of actions taken by me, or as a result of time healing old wounds, I'll never know. All I know is that as a result of becoming willing, I no longer carry the scars of hatred.

In the years following this experience, I have on occasion felt my father's presence and have even pointed out things as though he were there with me. I have come to believe that he is traveling this road with me. Sobriety was something that he couldn't experience while he was alive, but he is experiencing it now. Neither one of us is alone or angry any more.

—Morgan J., Crofton, MD

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Area 15 General Service

Treasurer, PO Box 1784
Pompano Beach, FL 33061

District 9 General Service

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

AA BIRTHDAY'S

August Celebrants

Broward Men's

Will ~ 5 yrs.
JD ~ 5 yrs.

Oakland Park

Don W. ~ 37 yrs.

Westside Men's

Scott Z. ~ 26 yrs.

Serenity Altogether

Rick B. ~ 25 yrs.

Let's Do Lunch

Charlie G. ~ 25 yrs.

441 Group

Sandy S. ~ 22 yrs.

Riverside Group

Denise J. ~ 41 yrs.

Coral Ridge

Erica ~ 3 yrs.

Davie Women's

Patty L. ~ 14 yrs.

Ft. Lauderdale

Men's

Dick R. ~ 59 yrs.

Coral Springs As

Bill Sees It

Barbara ~ 9 yrs.
Monica ~ 8 yrs.
Mark ~ 30 yrs.
Kevin ~ 6 yrs.

Ft. Lauderdale Women

Beverly P. ~ 33 yrs.
Lisa M. ~ 14 yrs.

Happy Destiny

Kathy G. ~ 41 yrs.

Women's Honesty

Charmaine ~ 4 yrs.
Ruthie ~ 3 yrs.
Michele B. ~ 13 yrs.
Marsha Mc. ~ 23 yrs.
Katherine C. ~ 28 yrs.

Easier Softer Way

Nancy G. ~ 6 yrs.
Taryn C. ~ 17 yrs.

Hollywood Men's

Joe A. ~ 31 yrs.
Tom ~ 24 yrs.

Each Day a New Beginning

Robert W. ~ 8 yrs.

Entirely Ready

Adie M. ~ 32 yrs.

Downtown Drydock

Terri S. ~ 16 yrs.
Patty M. ~ 13 yrs.

Candlelight Meditation

Rob ~ 13 yrs.
Heather ~ 6 yrs.



Other Notables

Ken M. ~ 43 yrs.
David S. ~ 37 yrs.
Laura P. ~ 14 yrs.
Cassie C. ~ 8 yrs.

New Day Group

Karo ~ 11 yrs.
Jeanne B. ~ 4 yrs.
Frank M. ~ 4 yrs.

Chickee Group

Sue Y. ~ 36 yrs.

True Self Group

Hannah A. ~ 30 yrs.

Women's Step Into Sobriety

Helene ~ 12 yrs.

Men's Independence

Eddie G. ~ 43 yrs.
Nico ~ 9 yrs.

Express Group ~ 43 yrs.

Greg B. ~ 28 yrs.
Paul A. ~ 18 yrs.
Nick ~ 7 yrs.
Joanne ~ 31 yrs.
Vernon ~ 31 yrs.
Esther ~ 13 yrs.

July Celebrants not previously mentioned

Thursday Night

Study Group

Marty D. ~ 6 yrs.

Broward Men's

Steve H. ~ 2 yrs.

Primary Purpose

Edmark G. ~ 5 yrs.

Smell the Coffee

Mike ~ 9 yrs.

Sober Sisters

Elsa ~ 3 yrs.
Michelle ~ 3 yrs.
Sherill ~ 2 yrs.

Sunshine Group

Deanna ~ 3 yrs.

By Any Means

Peter S. ~ 28 yrs.

Let's Do Lunch Bunch

Leslie ~ 1 yr.
Debbie ~ 26 yrs.
Bob ~ 34 yrs.

Meditation at the Rock

DonnaMarie Y. ~ 2 yrs.

Coral Springs

Group ~ 48 yrs.

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.)

BRIDGING THE GAP

has a new number

724-680-0430

BCIC - Broward County Institutions Committee

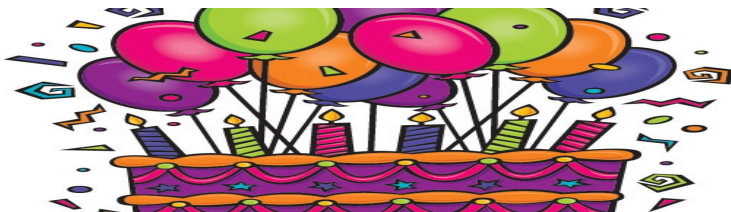
**Next Meeting:
August 10th - 10:00 a.m.**

Twelve Step House
205 SW 23rd St.,
Ft. Lauderdale

**Next
Intergroup Meeting**

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

**SUNDAY, August 18th
at 1:00 p.m.**



Local Readers Share.....

Reflections on Step 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

Sometimes I didn't come home for hours, sometimes days. Our house was foreclosed on, our vehicles repossessed, and anything I could pawn was gone. Wow! So many people to add to the list; people who had trusted me, counted on me, given me things of sentimental value, people I had hurt and worried on a regular basis.

We moved in with my in-laws in their small condo. Their living room and sectional couch became our bedroom. We had no money to speak of and I stole from my family and anyone else in order to drink like I wanted to, which was all the time. I'd been fired from my job long before that. The list continued, as I remembered the people and property I had disrespected continually.

I was finally asked to leave by my in-laws. My husband was allowed to stay, and he did, but I was happy to leave, even though I had nowhere to go. I knew I could survive on the street, as long as I could just drink as much as I wanted, when I wanted. After all, I thought, I was only hurting myself.

I stayed out there on the street, a homeless wreck, for a couple of years. The Department of Corrections was happy to put me in jail, and that was later followed by a few visits to treatment. Something, somewhere, finally clicked. I got involved in Alcoholics Anonymous. I started going to meetings. I got a sponsor, a home group, phone numbers of other members, and started to work the steps.

I procrastinated big time on working my steps, but my sponsor was patient and loving. The magic of AA had started to take hold in meetings and I was beginning to feel really good.

By the time I got to Step 8, I had no problem thinking of people I had harmed. I was able to take a lot from my Step 4 resentment inventory. My sponsor told me that I should list every single person I could think of that I had harmed, even if I'd never be able to make amends to them. The list was really long, including the IRS, and so she then told me to take it easy. For the time being, I only had to BE WILLING.

I can't wait to tell you to whom and how I made amends. God seemed to place the opportunities right in my lap!! Stay tuned for Step 9.

— Pat W., Lauderdale Lakes



**WE LOVE OUR
VOLUNTEERS!!**



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.

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: directors, tolerate, distinction, abstinent, hammered, presence, foreclosed, treatment, resentment, committee, contributions, responsible

I AM RESPONSIBLE....

WHEN ANYONE, ANYWHERE, REACHES OUT FOR HELP,
I WANT 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 CALL BACK: _____ AND/OR PAY A VISIT: _____

AVAILABILITY: MONDAY to FRIDAY: _____ WEEKENDS: _____

8:00am-12:00pm _____ 12:00pm-5:00pm _____ 5:00pm-9:00pm _____ 9:00pm-8:00am _____

TO COMPLETE A 12-STEP CALL, you only need to be sober one day, but you NEVER GO ALONE.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE! SEND COMPLETED FORM TO: help@aabroward.org



MEETING CHANGES

Monday

NEW MEETING Parkland Happy Hour meets at 4901 Godfrey Rd. in Parkland, 4 PM, OD.

North Beach Group which meets at St. Mark's Church on Oakland Park Blvd. in Ft. Lauderdale is now an OPEN meeting.

Focus on Sobriety moved out of the hospital in Tamarac and into Our Place 2, 8447 W. McNab. They now meet at 7:30 PM.

Wednesday

5:30 Meeting at 441 is now an OPEN meeting for Beginners, in Margate.

NEW MEETING Parkland Happy Hour meets at 4901 Godfrey Rd. in Parkland, 4 PM, OD.

Thursday

Redeeming Grace Women's Recovery meets at 8:30 PM. New City Fellowship Church, 2740 Van Buren St., Hollywood. OSPDw

Donuts and Solution meets at the Wellness Center, 5225 NW 33rd Avenue, Ft. Lauderdale at 7:00 PM, CSP.

NEW MEETING Russian Speaking Alcoholics of S. Fl. meets at the Twelve Step House, 205 SW 23 St., Ft. Lauderdale, 7:00 PM, OSTR.

Friday

I Came To Stay which met at the 101 Club in Pompano NO LONGER MEETS.

Recovery on the Rocks which met at Christ Community Church in Pompano NO LONGER MEETS.

NEW MEETING Parkland Happy Hour meets at 4901 Godfrey Rd. in Parkland, 4 PM, OD.

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

Saturday

Saturday Night Anniversary Meeting that met at Lambda South once a month, NO LONGER MEETS.

KIS Lunchtime which meets at WBC in Davie M-F has added a meeting on Saturday at 12:30 PM.

NEW MEETING Secular and Sober will now meet on Saturdays at Noon at the MCC, 1480 SW 9th Avenue, upstairs—Room 1 (Sunshine Cathedral) OCCag.

NEW MEETING W.A.W.A. Group meets at the West Broward Club, 8396 A State Rd. 84, Davie, 10:00 PM, OD.

Saturday Night Serenity which met at Our Saviour Lutheran Church in Plantation NO LONGER MEETS.



WORLD WIDE CONNECTIONS HAPPEN HERE

A few years ago, a man called Intergroup from Australia looking for a particular individual. Intergroup connected him to a sober member and this year that man from Broward County was able to take a Big Book Weekend to Australia!!

Upcoming Events

- July 31- Aug 4** **63rd Florida State Convention** is now happening in Miami. View agenda online at 63.FloridaStateConvention.com Trump Doral Hotel. Speakers, Archives, Fun, Fellowship.
- Aug. 10** **Carry the Message Day 2019** hosted by District 9 General Service and BCIC. NSU, Terry Bldg., 3200 S. University Drive, Davie. Coffee, Dessert 5:30. 2 speakers at 7 PM. Free service Event. Bring a newcomer and dessert, and learn about the many service opportunities.
- Aug. 24** **Traditions Workshop (1-3)** hosted by Broward County Intergroup. Limited seating. 7 PM at Intergroup bookstore. Refreshments. Call or email to reserve your spot. help@aabroward.org
- Sept. 7** **District 9 Spaghetti Dinner** will be at NSU, 3200 N. University Drive, Davie, Terry Bldg. Cafeteria, 5:30 PM, Tickets required and can be purchased in advance or at the door.
- Oct. 12** **Early Timers Meeting** hosted by District 9 Archives Committee, NSU, 3200 S. University Drive, Terry Bldg., 5:30 PM, Free Event, 3 speakers and dessert. Full archives display.
- Oct. 27** **44th Annual Intergroup Picnic** will be held at Snyder Park, Caldwell Pavilion. Live band, games, volleyball, raffles, lots of food and double speaker meeting. 11:00 AM—4:00 PM, \$8 in advance, \$10 at gate, kids under 12 eat free. Admission to park not included.