



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 2
FEBRUARY 2020

Step Two - "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

Ceased Fighting

She connected to the power in the rooms, and with her sponsor's help, she learned to take off the gloves

The Second Step was vital in my spiritual journey. I've been hearing a lot about it recently and am pleased to find I'm not as unique as I thought. I am an atheist and not on my way to belief. The Big Book says "God is everything or else He is nothing." I chose the latter and got on with working the program.

I worked Step One prior to getting a sponsor and went back over it when I found one. Her first question was, "How do you feel about alcoholism as a disease?" I answered, "It could not be anything except a disease." We moved on, reading every word of the Big Book and talking about recovery and actions. We talked about Step Two and about AA. She was satisfied that I had found a power greater than myself using Alcoholics Anonymous.

I knew almost at once that AA could restore me to sanity. Look at all of the examples of it! I mean, I did not believe in any kind of god and yet there you all were: happier than any group of people I had ever met, and obviously no longer slaves to alcohol. You must have the answer somewhere. I was told that if I wanted what you had, I needed to do what you did. Maybe not having an intervening HP made me listen more closely or gave me more willingness to act.

In Chapter Three are the words that gave me release from the obsession to drink: "We had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics." I had a disease and AA was a solution that was helping countless alcoholics live a normal, sane life.

The Ninth Step Promises have come true for me: I began to know "a new freedom and a new happiness ... intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us." I began to believe that my darkest day would be an asset to help another woman find a way to live comfortably in her own skin without alcohol.

Once a person online made a comment about how I was pretty high-minded to think I was doing it by myself. Being pretty new myself, I flew back a response I won't repeat here. My sponsor flinched when I told her about my retaliation. She said I had to cease fighting everyone and everything, like it says in the Big Book. She also showed me that the book also says, "Love and tolerance of others is our code." Be it a secret code or a code written as law, I knew I had to love.

My sponsor is a treasure. She is a school art teacher, which may explain her patience. But the truth is, I don't think she ever set herself up with any expectation that I would change my thinking. When I got to Step Five, I asked her, "How do I admit to 'god'?" She told me she would handle that part for me. Again, it was back to the business of the program. I came here to get sober and I got a lot more than I expected to get, and I did it without having to compromise my belief system. Our founders were truly inspired.

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Intergroup Bookstore
will be closed on
President's Day,
Monday, February 17th
Have a safe and
sober holiday!



Concept II

**The General Service
Conference of A.A.
has become,
for nearly every
practical purpose,
the active voice and
the effective
conscience of our
whole Society in its
world affairs.**

Tradition Two - "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

Benign Anarchy

I never was much of one for authority, unless I had the opportunity to exercise my own. I resented the authority of state and federal governments, my church, the telephone company, my family. I figured I had the right to do what I wanted to do as long as I didn't hurt anyone, and if I didn't get my way it was because of "their" narrow-mindedness. There was no way I could be wrong about anything, and I knew my opinion as to how things should be were the same as any other rational person's.

Then came AA, and I soon saw where there was an authority figure in my life that, try as I might, *always* got its way with me: alcohol.

When I heard AA described as "a benign anarchy," the poetic justice of its irony was not lost on me. Certainly, like many of us, I tried to inflict my ways of doing things, my thinking, and my behavior on others, with little regard for their standards. Certainly I expected others to treat me with the respect I would give them--provided they agreed with me. But I learned early on that if I wanted to get along with people and keep from getting into conflicts that might lead me to drinking, I had to give others the right to be wrong. The idea of a benign anarchy made the "rules" of AA more palatable, and somehow I was able to let others in my group tell me what to do. But there was the comfort in the back of my mind that if I chose to, I could do it my way, and the group be damned.

As my recovery progressed, I was drawn into service work. I mopped floors, winterized the pipes, and began doing public information work--a natural, since I held degrees in journalism and education. In the course of this, an editor offered me the opportunity to write a story about local AA for his newspaper, and my baptism by fire into the Traditions began.

I studied how to phrase things, protect anonymity without losing characterization, express no opinion on outside issues, and so forth. When I had the story complete, I knew it was good: nicely structured in three parts, describing my progression into alcoholism, the disease concept and Fellowship, and the Steps and my progression into recovery. I showed it to Ramona, my group's PI chairperson, who, while enthused about it, frankly admitted she didn't know much about writing. She suggested I show it to Jim, a fellow on the other side of the county who was the area PI chairman. This guy was a sign painter, for Pete's sake. What did he know about journalism?

Jim looked it over, thought it was pretty good, with some reservations, and indicated it would be a good idea to show it to this guy in my home group--seems this guy was the area delegate, or something like that. Now I respected Charlie, but I really didn't like him. He seemed to act like some wise and pompous AA guru. "Unreal," that was the word for him. Besides, if he was going to have the final say, why did I waste my time with Jim and Ramona?

I was beginning to get tired of this run-around for what was really just a simple feature story, but my desire to carry the message of AA (part of our primary purpose) through the printed media would not be denied. I went to Charlie, and he read it, then sat back and said, "This is basically a good story, but I think there are some things we need to look at."

"That does it," I thought. "This four-eyed turkey is going to presume to tell me, a trained journalist, how to write a story." But his suggestions were minimal. While he didn't argue about the amount I drank, he indicated that the average reader would find it hard to believe--"sensational" was the word he used. And if I was going to write about AA for the public, he said, perhaps the references to treatment centers should be deleted to avoid any appearance of affiliation.

Somehow I swallowed my pride and took his suggestions, made the changes, and submitted the story. The group conscience of myself, two PI chairpeople, and the delegate had reached a decision. No one ordered me to do anything, and I did not have to be insulted by their observations. I did not realize it at the time, but the experience was a perfect example of "our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

At five years of sobriety, I had made the rounds of GSR, district secretary, district CPC chairman, and all-round Mr. AA. Because of my work, I wasn't regularly able to be around my group to impart--I mean impart--my experience, strength, hope and wisdom to new members. Years later, I became a bleeding deacon. By then my long-time home group had changed, with members going to groups nearer their homes, moving out of state, dying, or getting drunk.

There were some real problems, chief among them being the group's failure to adhere to our singleness of purpose. I butted heads with those who wanted to let anyone attend closed meetings, and the result was a lot of

Recovery Word Puzzle

NEOCDEC
TISCOYE
MOMPERCSOI
RYNHACA
MUTTLEAI
TANSLOSINAE



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

FENDIMOR
MASTERSCAN
LIESPADR
VEBILEE
BRIMELASE
YARTLELEN

2020
Where & Whens
are now in!

\$1.50 per booklet

Intergroup received two
DONATED BOOKS

for archives this month

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

Bob H. and George D.

*A first printing Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions
and an International photo journal: Global Sober*

Volunteer Opportunities

District 9 SYS Spring Fling Karaoke and Chili Cookoff will have the next two planning meetings on

Thursdays at 7:00 PM

February 5th @ Skyline Chili, 2834 N University Dr., Sunrise 33322

February 19th @ Denny's, 3151 NW 9th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale 33309

The next planning meeting for the **57th Intergroup Appreciation Banquet** will be

Tuesday, February 11 at 6:00 PM at the

Intergroup Bookstore, 3317 NW 10th Terrace, Ste. 404, Oakland Park

Pick up a commitment today!!

SERVICE KEEPS YOU SOBER



(continued from page 2)

anger on all sides and some very hurt feelings, particularly my own. The group was flaky, I said. They told me no one had the right to judge any AA group as flaky. This program, they said, helped them to deal with other physical disorders, as well as their alcoholism, and they were not going to deny this help to anyone who could use it.

I saw the mistakes, I thought. No one had been around to teach these people the meaning and importance of AA Traditions, since the old-timers were gone and I had been away so much. So I tried to talk Traditions every chance I got.

They didn't like that, either.

The hardest decision I've made in sobriety was to leave my original home group. I had become, in their eyes, a dictatorial pariah, and their assessment was pretty accurate. There was very little love expressed by myself regarding the problems I saw. There was no chance for a group conscience (though we did make a stab at taking a group inventory), because minds were closed on all sides. A closed mind prevents an informed opinion, and any opinion based on misunderstanding is worthless.

Things worked out, however. I joined a much larger home group that holds monthly business meetings, and I hear by the grapevine that my "adversaries" at my old home group now have a willingness to learn about the AA program and its Traditions.

My new home group is amazing to watch. With around 150 members, there are usually 25 or 30 that show up for business meetings. We get bent out of shape about some things, such as whether taking contributions for literature to be used in the state's substance abuse treatment is affiliation. But when the arguments are made, the vote is taken, the minority opinion expressed, and the vote retaken, the strong convictions of "winners" and "losers" generally take a back seat as we close. None of us govern, none of us get our way all the time, and all of us cling to the love of this Fellowship for our emotional well-being, our sobriety, and our lives--another aspect of our primary purpose.

A benign anarchy? Indeed!

Young Rebel Comes to and Comes to Believe

When I think of step 2, an AA bumper sticker I have seen comes to mind. It says... Came...Came to... Came to Believe. That is truly how my journey has been, with believing in a Power greater than myself. I came to AA angry with religion and thinking that spirituality was the same as religion, so I didn't really want any part of it. I grew up forced into an organization, by my parents who didn't seem to have any kind of a connection with any Power greater than themselves. Being forced by a Jewish parent, into the Catholic church, attending CCD classes, and having to make the sacraments of the church made me confused and resentful. There were plenty of other things I wanted to do with my valuable time rather than go to church or learn about prayer. But in my younger days, I did whatever my parents told me to do, especially before I entered my rebellious years. Around age 13, I hit a tipping point as I went against my parents in any way I could figure out, which included getting as far away from religious activities as possible. I started hanging out with different people outside of my neighborhood, who had way more freedom than I grew up with. I started to participate in activities that my parents didn't approve of, like smoking cigarettes, staying out past curfew, and eventually drinking alcohol. This behavior was amplified when I entered high school and I started living a double life. During the day, I lived the life of an all-American teenager. I was captain of the cheerleading squad, played musical instruments, participated in activities with volunteer organizations, and kept my grades high enough to achieve honor roll status. Nights and weekends were the times that I spiraled totally out of control with people I had no business being around, partying way too hard in neighborhoods that couldn't look more different than the one I grew up in. My rebellious nature got more severe and dangerous as years went on, but I always managed to keep up the façade of being the "good girl caught up with the wrong crowd". I went away to college and the drinking continued. I failed out and was forced to move back to my parents, which meant hanging with my old crew and the drinking continued. I got a string of waitressing and bartending jobs, and, needless to say, the drinking continued. There was no room in my life for anything that looked like religion/spirituality, and especially no room for God.

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General Service Office, NY
PO 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
Treasurer, PO Box 1784
Pompano Beach, FL 33061

District 9 General Service
P.O. Box 100126
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33310

AA BIRTHDAY'S

February Celebrants

Broward Men's

Brian M. ~ 27 yrs.
Morgan ~ 7 yrs.

Early Risers

Victoria L. ~ 9 yrs.

Oakland Park

Sandy P. ~ 49 yrs.
Pete B. ~ 32 yrs.
Jerry N. ~ 18 yrs.

Mountain Group

Kathy L. ~ 38 yrs.
Mike J. ~ 34 yrs.

KIS Lunchtime

Joe B. ~ 11 yrs.

Welcome Home

Beginners

Anthony M. ~ 2 yrs.

Came to Believe

Laura M. ~ 16 yrs.

Women's Noontime Boost

Priscilla M. ~ 18 yrs.

Westside Men's

Greg G. ~ 12 yrs.
Happy Bob ~ 17 yrs.

Dania After Work

Sherri D. ~ 11 yrs.

Don't Forget

Jay L. ~ 39 yrs.

Melrose Park

George G. ~ 13 yrs.

Express Group

Ashley J. ~ 10 yrs.
Reggie J. ~ 10 yrs.
Diana P. ~ 7 yrs.
Annie G. ~ 32 yrs.

East Naples

Donald M. ~ 19 yrs.
Richard P. ~ 27 yrs.
Howard M. ~ 8 yrs.

New Life Group

Rod ~ 3 yrs.
Bob D. ~ 12 yrs.

Other Notables

Ernie F. ~ 33 yrs.
Sara B. ~ 23 yrs.
Mike L. ~ 42 yrs.
Al S. ~ 21 yrs.

Pompano Beach Group

Susan ~ 9 yrs.

Brothers All Living Life

Sober

Matt H. ~ 1 yr.

Let's Do Lunch Bunch

Duayne K. ~ 14 yrs.

Easier Softer Way

Richard W. ~ 4 yrs.
Chris W. ~ 5 yrs.

Saturday Morning Awareness

Ryan T. ~ 6 yrs.
Ann P. ~ 28 yrs.
Jon J. ~ 38 yrs.

Each Day a New Beginning ~ 17 yrs.



January Celebrants *not previously mentioned*

Sober Sisters

Stephanie S. ~ 5 yrs.

441 Group

Ebony D. ~ 12 yrs.

Freedom From

Alcohol

Richard S. ~ 21 yrs.

Margate Group

Matt O. ~ 34 yrs.

Women's Hope in

Recovery

Adrienne ~ 11 yrs.

Express G.

Larry H. ~ 8 yrs.

Let's Do Lunch Bunch

John G. ~ 35 yrs.

Friends of Joe

Rick ~ 30 yrs.

Sober on the Beach

David L. ~ 40 yrs.



Serenity at 6:30

Matthew P. ~ 1 yr.

5:45 Happy Hour

Bill H. ~ 1 yr.

Other Notables

Johnny G. ~ 28 yrs.
Mary S. ~ 38 yrs.
Donna T. ~ 26 yrs.

Good Morning God

Annette ~ 1 yr.

Riverside Group

Nanette ~ 20 yrs.

Candlelight Meditation

Joe B. ~ 19 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

724-680-0430

BCIC - Broward County Institutions Committee

Next Meeting:
Saturday, February 8th
at 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, February 23rd
at 1:00 p.m.**

(continued from page 4)

Whenever I got in trouble, I would use something called a foxhole prayer, that went like "please God get me out of this", with a promise to clean up my act. But that never happened, and that prayer was just repeated over and over, ad infinitum.

I finally hit some kind of bottom and decided that it might not be a bad idea to get some help. I went through a program and did what I knew how to do best. I made everything look good on the outside. I did the bare minimum of what was suggested, and I really made it believable that I was doing what I was supposed to do. I kept sponsors and told them what they wanted to hear, until I hit a wall that I couldn't lie my way out of, and then I would just get a new sponsor. I couldn't fully accept that I needed a spiritual solution, because I didn't believe that it was my spirit that was broken. I thought I could fix my problems on my own and that I could go on living without spirituality and be just fine. I used to be offended when people talked about God in meetings and suggested prayer and meditation as a solution. I worked this program with half-measures and it availed me nothing...except a head full of reasons and excuses, as to why I didn't need to attend meetings or be sober. I made the decision that it was time to experience life the way a young lady was supposed to. In my mind, I was going to be living the high life of the rich and famous, cocktails in hand, of course. But that is not what happened, except for the cocktails. It wasn't as glamorous as I had imagined it. I felt more alone than ever. In a couple months I was beaten into submission and I was defeated, but I was given a gift. I got the gift of desperation.

I CAME...to Alcoholics Anonymous and I was welcomed back by smiling faces and hugs. I was ready to take suggestions and work the steps thoroughly and honestly with a sponsor. I went to a woman that I had admired for all the time I had been around the rooms. She seemed to really have a handle on serenity and always was so happy and positive. I was miserable and I wanted what she had. I really needed it. She brought me through the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous and taught me how to take the steps. She spoke to me in a language I understood, the language of the heart. She taught me that I was never really alone, as long as I had a relationship with a Power greater than myself. I learned how to live life on life's terms and little by little...I CAME TO.

As I have gone through a few years of sobriety, it has been a wild rollercoaster of emotional ups and downs. There have been plenty of good times, but there have also been more than a few really tough situations. I remember when I came in, people who had a lot of time in the program had certain sayings they would offer to me when I was struggling. "If your ass falls off, put it in a bag and take it to a meeting." "It is easier to stay sober than to get sober." And my personal favorite, "Just don't drink, no matter what." These are just a few of the gems I received from these people who had been sober longer than I have been alive. I went through tough situations sometimes thinking how much easier it would be to handle if I could escape to the land of the drunken abyss, but then I remembered that my situation wouldn't go away, and that drinking would definitely make it worse. The things I learned from this Group Of Drunks were helping me through tough times. The support I got from the people in the rooms, who had been through similar situations, came to me in different forms like advice, suggestions, meetings, service opportunities, and literature. My Higher Power speaks often through other people, including every woman that has sponsored me, my support group, and complete strangers that turned into loved ones because they shared something at a meeting that I needed to hear. I was slowly forming a relationship with this Power I had rebelled against for so long. Through learning how to pray on my own terms, using prayers out of the Big Book, and hearing other people's experiences, I started to conceptualize my own Higher Power.

Getting through one "problem" at a time and coming through to the other side taught me that no matter what, I didn't have to drink. If I had FAITH, I could get through life on life's terms and be happy, joyous, and free. I learned slowly but surely that I had to have FAITH so much bigger than any fear I came across. After successfully staying sober through situations I never thought possible, it was suggested that I use my experience, strength and hope to show others that it works. It didn't matter what I called it, and it didn't matter how I did it; I just had to keep a constant connection and believe. I finally CAME TO BELIEVE that a Power greater than me could restore me to sanity. I could no longer doubt or ignore the fact that this was working and my life was getting better.

Although it doesn't happen as often as it did in early sobriety, I still have bad days and come across difficult situations. As long as I continue to come to believe in, and grow in understanding of a Power greater than myself, I can get through any situation that comes my way. I no longer cringe at the topic of spirituality, but instead look forward to growing and expanding my own ever-changing definition. I choose to live by the mottos of recovery today, because they are no longer just words; they are a way of life that works for me. "Faith without works is dead." I have learned by living as a sober woman with God's grace, I have been placed in a position of neutrality. I no longer crave the chaos I used to think that I thrived in. I no longer look to alcohol as a solution to my biggest problem, which I found out was me. I no longer think I know everything and I don't ever want to stop learning. I am eternally thankful for the program, the fellowship, and most of all the Power that made it all possible.

In Love & Gratitude, Michelle C.

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: concede, society, compromise, anarchy, ultimate, sensational, informed, sacraments, spiraled, believe, miserable, eternally.

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

Tuesday

NEW MEETING U Gotta Wanna meets at 4thDimension Club, 4425 Hollywood Blvd, Hollywood, 7:00 PM. ORF **Lit-ter-ture Group** which met at Lambda South at 8:30 AM in Fort Lauderdale NO LONGER MEETS. **Keep it in the Day** which met at Temple Beth Emet at 6:00 PM in Cooper City NO LONGER MEETS.

Wednesday

NEW MEETING From Under the Bridge meets at the 101 Club, 700 SW 10 St. & Dixie, Pompano, 5:30 PM. OD **Living Sober** in Pompano has moved to 200 NE 2nd Avenue. Time and format remain the same.

Thursday

NEW MEETING AA in the Afternoon meets at West Broward Club at 3:30 PM, 8396-A State Rd. 7, Davie. OD **Then and Now** has moved to the West Broward Club in Davie. Time and format remain the same. **Lit-ter-ture Group** which met at Lambda South at 8:30 AM in Fort Lauderdale NO LONGER MEETS.

Saturday

Here and Now which met at the Twelve Step House at 2:30 in Ft. Lauderdale NO LONGER MEETS.

Please have your group consider donating a gift basket for our Intergroup Appreciation Banquet to be held in April. The basket raffle is a lot of fun and a key element to the fundraising success of the dinner. Thank you for your support.



Things we cannot change.....

Jim R..

and Rudy J.

*They will be missed.
May they Rest in Peace.*



The 9th Annual
AA's Got Talent Show
was another fun and fabulous
fundraising event for Intergroup.

Thank you to everyone who made this a special
and successful night, either by doing service
on a committee, performing,
or buying tickets.

We appreciate you all so much!

Upcoming Events

- Feb. 22** **7th Annual French Intergroup Conference**, Pat Larking Center, 520 NW 3rd St., Pompano Beach, 9 AM—9 PM. For more info: 954-695-8073 or aa-floride.org
- Mar. 7** **District 9 Spring Fling Festival** NSU, Terry Building, Cafeteria and Steele Auditorium, 3200 S. University Drive, Davie, 6-10 PM. Karaoke and Chili Cook-off.
- Apr. 25** **57th Annual Intergroup Appreciation Banquet** Tropical Acres Steakhouse, 2500 Griffin Rd., Dania. Appetizers 6:00 PM, Dinner 7:00 PM, 2 Speakers 8:00 PM, Basket Raffles to follow. \$45 Reserved seating only—tickets must be purchased in advance.
- Jun. 5-7** **FCYPAA** will be held at the Bonaventure Resort and Spa. Pre-register and book your room now. FCYPAA2020.COM