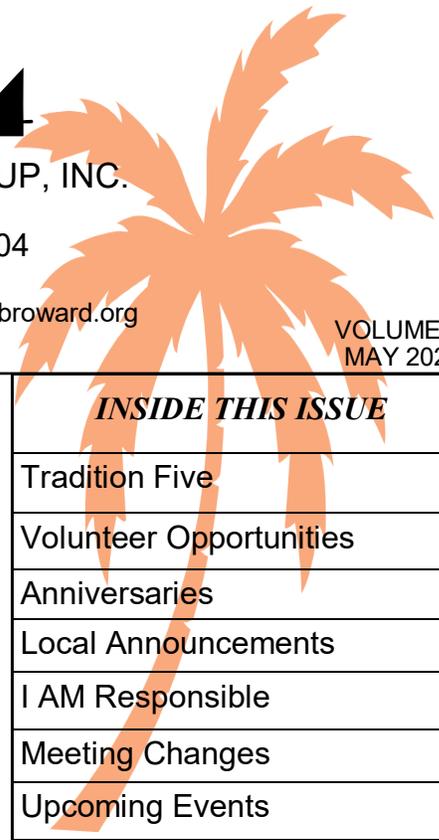


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VOLUME 5
MAY 2020

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

You've Got to Give to Get

A loner on the fringes of AA finds the courage to seek out a sponsor

I DON'T know what I expected, coming into Alcoholics Anonymous for the first time. I can vividly remember pondering the Steps on the wall during my first meeting. I certainly did not expect to find God or even the more acceptable "Higher Power" there either, but there he (or she) was. The good news was that I had some belief in God before I got to AA, so it did not scare me that much.

Step One seemed okay to me. I had known for a long time that I was an alcoholic; I just did not realize there was a specific label for it. All I knew was that I did not know how to stop drinking. I used to argue out loud with myself as I got wasted on my way in to work. "I've got to stop this," I would say. Only to shout back, "You know you can't stop, so why even bother worrying about it?"

I could accept Step Two, as well. A counselor suggested that AA might be of some use to me. I had gone to see him because I couldn't stand living in my own skin even one minute longer. He asked me to take a personality test, with what I thought were odd questions, like, "Which job would you prefer, librarian or firefighter?" and "How often have you considered suicide?"

I tried to answer as honestly as I could. During my next visit we discussed the test. He looked at me and said, "You're suicidal," and I thought, "So? Isn't everybody?" He explained that it wasn't normal to feel wretched the way I did, but I couldn't remember feeling any other way. Alcohol was the only thing I had found that could relieve those feelings, even for a short time. I had always thought that if you were as smart as I was you would see how hopeless the whole life thing was. It turns out that really isn't true. I feel blessed today that I never had the guts to pull the trigger.

Unlike some others, I was clear on the insanity thing. I was crazy and had been told so in no uncertain terms. The people I met in AA gave me hope. They laughed and smiled, something I had not done in a long time. Like the literature says, I wanted what they had. They said AA had given this hope to them, and I believed them. AA was the Higher Power I began to trust to restore sanity to my life.

I'd have told you that I did not have a problem with Step Three, that I was doing it as I had begun to pray, but I did not understand early on what the Step was asking me to do. My prayers were not very mature. They went something like, "Me, me, me, me,"

continued on page 4

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Tradition Five | 2 |
| Volunteer Opportunities | 3 |
| Anniversaries | 5 |
| Local Announcements | 6 |
| I AM Responsible | 7 |
| Meeting Changes | 8 |
| Upcoming Events | 8 |



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.

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

Football Fans

Sports teams can be as divisive as politics and religion. Should we leave our loyalties at the door?

Recently, a situation occurred at a meeting, that was previously my home group for 20 years, that has deeply troubled me. At this meeting, everyone was dressed in apparel that was supportive to our football team.

I was excited to see so many loyal and sober football fans sharing in the excitement as football is a big sport in our city. My excitement faded into sorrow and sadness when I saw the speaker's table draped with promotional materials from the team.

I shared concerns with a few of my closest home group friends. I mentioned the importance of singleness of purpose, but my concerns were treated with indifference, and the cloth article stayed on the table.

Quietly, I left before the meeting started, disappointed by the lack of concern. On the way home, I asked myself these questions; how would a non-sports newcomer feel? What other NON-AA promotional item (however worthy) might be put on the table in the future? and what does this article of cloth have to do with AA?

At home, I got out my Twelve and Twelve and recalled what previous sponsors had shared with me about the Traditions—especially Traditions Five and Ten. I spent several minutes in reflection and prayer as well as taking a brief Tenth Step inventory of which the results are:

1. I can pray for guidance and understanding.
2. I can go to another meeting (which I am considering).
3. These people are my friends, and although we may disagree on this situation, it will not change my friendship with them.
4. **I can be thankful to those long timers for giving me tools to work thru this problem**

—Jerry K., Pittsburgh, PA

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WE AT INTERGROUP ARE **HONORED AND HUMBL**ED TO SERVE
THE FELLOWSHIP OF BROWARD COUNTY!
YOUR GENEROSITY OF TIME AND FINANCES ARE TRULY A
DISPLAY OF **GRATITUDE IN ACTION.**
WE APPRECIATE YOU ALL SO MUCH, AND KNOW WE COULDN'T DO
IT WITHOUT YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT! **BLESS YOU ALL!!!**

Recovery Word Puzzle

STEWBIE
 LICUSIAD
 YONIRTIM
 NEGACUDI
 STAYLELOI
 SYNGROITEE



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

DEILTIM
 KOERBTOSO
 LUGREFTA
 VEEPDRERS
 NETSRAVE
 LIFTHAUF

DO YOU LOVE CAMPING?



Whether you like camping or Glamping, the new Intergroup fundraiser will involve a weekend conference at Birch State Park in January 2021. Tent or cabin camping available. Details coming soon. Overnight space limited to 118. To get involved please email Mary at help@aabroward.org

INTERGROUP HAS NEW STORE HOURS

(when not in quarantine)

Monday — Friday
10:00 AM — 6:00 PM
 and Saturday 9:00 AM — 1:00 PM

Volunteer Opportunities

Many planning meetings have been cancelled due to Quarantine order. Please check website for any updates or changes as they occur.

www.aabroward.org

Things we cannot change.....

Delores (Dee) B.



*She will be missed.
 May she Rest in Peace.*



The bookstore is still open for "take out only" on a limited schedule, Mon-Fri 1-6 PM. Please just call, email or place the order online and we will get it ready for pickup or shipping. No cash at this time; only checks or credit card, please.

As soon as we get through this health threat there will be LOTS of volunteer opportunities, as we get our events off the ground with less planning time than usual. Stay tuned and stay willing.



SERVICE KEEPS YOU SOBER

(continued from page 1)

".... and, oh yeah, if you have any time, you might want to think about these other people, too."

I know today that God's will for me is to be happy, joyous and free, and the way to that freedom is through the Steps, all of them. This is where I faltered. Step Three is the jumping off place where I should have become willing to clean house, to examine my past and to share it with another.

I was not prepared to do the Fourth Step, the moral inventory, and there was no way in heck that I was ever going to do the Fifth. I was never going to reveal my darkest secrets to anyone. They would go to the grave with me. I couldn't see how doing any of it would do me any good.

Not moving forward with the Steps left me only on the fringes of AA. I had always felt that the people there had the ability to see through me, that they could tell what I was thinking without my saying a word. That feeling inside started to get very uncomfortable. I stopped praying, and I cut down on meetings until I wasn't going at all. It did not take long for my insanity to return.

I didn't take a drink, but my depression and anxiety grew and grew. Every month or so, one friend from my home group would call. I had gotten to know him well in the short time I had been in the program. We often went fishing together after work. He was the most serene person I had ever met.

"How are you doing?" he would ask. "Fine," I would lie.

"Well, I just called to see how you were doing." And that was it. This went on for 10 months. The longer it went, the worse I felt, until finally I had enough. I was at last tormented enough to tell the truth and to reach out for help. I wasn't fine. I was awful. My life seemed to be crashing in around me and there was nothing I could do about it. He listened and cared.

I am eternally grateful to my friend. Today I believe that because he reached out my life was saved. With his help I had the courage (or humility) to return to meetings.

When I returned to AA I was able to find what I needed in the "John Wayne" group. We called it that because we did not hold hands during the Our Father. Everyone stood alone. We shook hands, but there wasn't any hugging. This isn't what everyone needs, but it worked for me at the time.

They were a bunch of crusty old-timers and they didn't take any of my crap. A guy with 10 years was still considered a kid in those meetings. I wanted to whimper and whine and complain, but they wouldn't let me get away with it. "We focus on the solution here, not the problem," they would say.

After nearly two years of white-knuckling it, I finally had the courage (or grace) to ask someone to be my sponsor. He was one of the toughest of the tough. I said, "You scare me. Will you be my sponsor?" While he was tough, he also had what seemed an unshakable faith in his Higher Power. He had a special gleam in his eye. When he talked about God, it was easier for me to believe, too.

He convinced me that if I wanted to stay sober and have a productive life, I needed to do all the Steps, not the Three-Step Waltz (One, two, three, slip). I learned that if I had truly made a decision in Step Three, I would move forward with the Steps. That would be how I turned my will and life over.

My sponsor helped me prepare a Fourth step by insisting that I not concern myself with the Fifth. That was tomorrow, and I needed to stay focused on today. When I whined that it was hard to look at all this bad stuff, he reminded me that the process had a purpose and that I needed to continue if I wanted to get better and stay sober.

Finally I finished my Fourth. I was still afraid of the Fifth. That hadn't changed. I still could not understand why this house cleaning was necessary. "You can wait as long as you want to stay miserable," he said. I had spent a long time sober and miserable. Fear or no fear, I was ready to try anything.

Continued on page 6

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|---|--|--|
| <p><u>General Service Office, NY</u> PO Box 459, Grand Central Station New York, NY 10164-0371 212.870.3400</p> <p><u>Bridging The Gap</u> 877.207.2242</p> | <p><u>Broward Co. Intergroup, Inc.</u> 3317 NW 10th Terrace, Ste 404 Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309 954.462.7202</p> <p><u>BCIC</u> P.O. Box 22701 Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33335</p> | <p><u>Area 15 General Service</u> Treasurer, PO Box 1784 Pompano Beach, FL 33061</p> <p><u>District 9 General Service</u> P.O. Box 100126 Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33310</p> |
|---|--|--|

AA BIRTHDAY'S

May Celebrants

Serenity Altogether

David H. ~ 8 yrs.
Ron J. ~ 36 yrs.

Sober Sisters

Jan S. ~ 35 yrs.
Jen ~ 11 yrs.
Karen L. ~ 11 yrs.

Tough Love

MaryJo W. ~ 34 yrs.

Ft. Lauderdale Women

Judy J. ~ 15 yrs.

Women's Step Into Sobriety

Cassandra C. ~ 6 yrs.

Broward Men's

Sebastian ~ 5 yrs.

Freedom From Alcohol

Jackie S. ~ 38 yrs.

Coral Ridge Group

Jodi W. ~ 19 yrs.

Then and Now

Tim S. ~ 37 yrs.

Express Group

Bobby ~ 8 yrs.
Geri ~ 11 yrs.

5:45 Happy Hour

Linden ~ 34 yrs.

Friends of Joe

Larry F. ~ 27 yrs.

Other Notables

Amanda P. ~ 7 yrs.
Victoria R. ~ 10 yrs.
Rob D. ~ 11 yrs.
Christopher C. ~ 14 yrs.
Aisling ~ 21 yrs.
Jeff S. ~ 31 yrs.
Russell S. ~ 31 yrs.
Gail O. ~ 37 yrs.

Meditation at the Rock

Mary R. ~ 14 yrs.

Sunshine Group

Donna H. ~ 11 yrs.
Dave A. ~ 8 yrs.

Happy Destiny

Sheila C. ~ 26 yrs.

Saturday Morning Awareness

Joey B. ~ 8 yrs.

Plantation Happy Hour

Keith N. ~ 5 yrs.
Howard S. ~ 5 yrs.
Peggy D. ~ 15 yrs.
Lou P. ~ 20 yrs.
Robin S. ~ 26 yrs.

We Came to Stay ~ 33 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.)

STAY SAFE AND STAY HEALTHY



BCIC - Broward County Institutions Committee is now holding meetings Electronically.

Go to bcic-aa.com for more information
Until further notice.

Our May Intergroup Meeting at the Twelve Step House

will not be meeting due to Covid-19 Quarantine.
Check website for updates.



HAPPY SOBER ANNIVERSARY

General Service of District 9 (Broward County)
and the South Florida Area 15
have begun holding meetings and planning meetings for events
with Zoom technology. Check their websites for more info.
www.district9aa.org www.area15aa.org

(continued from page 4)

Now I needed to find someone to do my Fifth Step with. Then, I remembered the man who had called me again and again when I was so sick, but couldn't admit it. He was there when no one else was, and he said that he would be honored.

He made me as comfortable as he could, and I told him all about myself. There was one last thing and I wasn't sure that I could share it. It was the worst thing I had done. I had been warned that our secrets keep us sick, and I wanted my life to get better more than anything, so for that reason I was able to let it out. He said, "I did that, too". All the time I'd wasted beating myself up and anesthetizing myself to avoid the anguish. Now I wasn't alone! It was if a two-ton weight had been lifted from my shoulders.

When I arrived home that evening, I felt as if I were floating on air. I could see myself for the first time in my life as one among many, part of the human race, not separated from my fellows. It was the closest thing to the strike of lightning spiritual experience the Big Book talks about. I had never felt closer to my Higher Power.

I have since worked through the rest of the Steps and have been sober now for a few 24 hours. My life is blessed beyond my comprehension. I am grateful for the guidance and love the members of AA showed me when I first walked through the doors. I try to do the same thing for the newcomer.

Those John Wayne guys made it clear: "You gotta give it away to keep it." So I make a special effort to remind the new guy that there are Twelve Steps and that it is important to do them all. Sure, some of them can seem impossible to do, like Step Five seemed to me, but the peace of mind that waits on the other side is worth the effort.

— John L., Seabrook, TX

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Shout out to all the sober mothers
and veterans in Broward County.
Thank you for your endless service.
May everyone enjoy a safe holiday!



OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE

PLEASE GO TO WWW.AABROWARD.ORG FOR ALL UPDATES

We are updating the website throughout this crisis to the best of our ability. Thank you to everyone who has kept us informed. We have compiled a short list of local groups' electronic IDs for those who are looking for a local meeting online. We will not post this list to Website because of affiliation, but will share with you if you call 954.462.0403 or email help@aabroward.org, so that we may still be acting in accordance with our purpose, as a "clearinghouse for the convenience of members".

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., Michael E., Stephen W., Fran C., Peter S., Deborah C., Women's Step by Step and Rachel L.

WE HAVE NEVER NEEDED YOUR SUPPORT AS MUCH AS WE DO NOW!

Please consider becoming a faithful fiver today. Have your bank send us an Auto payment every month from your account or

DONATE NOW ON OUR WEBSITE USING PAYPAL

we would like to not have to use any more of our prudent reserve at this time

ANSWERS TO PUZZLE: website, suicidal, minority, guidance, loyalties, generosity, limited, bookstore, grateful, preserved, veterans, faithful

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

Many meetings have decided to go to online formats, but there are still a few places that meet face-to-face while practicing social distancing guidelines. Please be sure to call the office or email relay@aabroward.org for the latest information or check our website for notices.

Your Intergroup Board and Staff wish, above all, for everyone to remain safe and healthy, but we know we all have a genuine concern for helping the newcomer and protecting our primary purpose. You can rest assured that all our volunteers are still in place and phones are being answered every day. We give every caller the information needed or help them connect with another alcoholic in the most appropriate way for them.

"While our literature has preserved the integrity of the A.A. message, sweeping changes in society as a whole are reflected in new customs and practices within the Fellowship. Taking advantage of technological advances, for example, A.A. members with computers can participate in meeting online, sharing with fellow alcoholics across the country or around the world. In any meeting, anywhere, A.A.'s share experience, strength, and hope with each other, in order to stay sober and help other alcoholics. Modem-to-modem or face-to-face, A.A.'s speak the language of the heart in all its power and simplicity."

Taken from the Forward to the Fourth Edition, Alcoholics Anonymous, p. xxiv

INTERGROUP'S QUARANTINE SALES EVENT

Continues through May

**All conference-approved books and Grapevine books available at
OUR COST!**

And NOW: All bookcovers and shirts are 20%

All mugs and Broward History book are 30% off.

On all available stock, while supplies last

If you bought tickets or if your group was working on a gift basket for our Intergroup Appreciation Banquet please hold on to them!!

We will still be having our event, but we've postponed it until

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19th.

We truly appreciate your support, and we love this event as much as you do, so don't worry.... we promise it will be just as special in September.



Upcoming Events

- May 7-10 42nd Big Book Seminar** (in the spirit of Joe & Charlie) Boca Raton Marriott at Boca Center WAS CANCELLED. The seminar was held by electronic format in April, instead.
- May 16 Traditions Workshop** at the Intergroup Bookstore, Traditions 10-12, will be postponed until after quarantine. Date to be determined later.
- Jun. 5-7 FCYPAA** will be held at the Bonaventure Resort and Spa. Pre-register and book your room now. FCYPAA2020.COM Please check that website for updates as date approaches.
- Aug. 6-9 Florida State Convention** Jacksonville is still planning an amazing convention for this year in August. They welcome registrations. For information on speakers and workshops please go to www.64.floridastateconvention.com Please check that website for updates as date approaches.