

SUITE 404

BROWARD COUNTY INTERGROUP, INC.

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VOLUME 12 DECEMBER 2021

Step 12 - "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

Thumbing for the Holidays

Broke and lonely, a newcomer looking to do service hits the road and gets an unexpected surprise

It was a cold and snowy Christmas morning when I awoke in my friend's apartment. She had flown to California and asked me to house-sit for two weeks and feed her cat. I had been sober for barely two weeks. I was grateful because I had been "sofa surfing" since my car had been repossessed and was no longer available to provide sleeping accommodations.

Even if some of my friends with sofas had not grown tired of me, I didn't want to impose on any of them for too long. I had been attending meetings for a couple of months when someone suggested that I try coming to meetings sober.

So after a particularly disastrous drunk, I did just that. I began attending meetings sober at least once every day.

As the holidays loomed, many groups had parties and served food. I was unemployed and broke and so often these "eatin' meetin'" events were my only opportunity to eat.

Although I connected with several AA members I met at meetings, there were some people I just did not like. Jerry the Professor was one. (It seemed that more AAs had nicknames in those days.) Jerry was a dour, unfriendly fellow. I assumed that he didn't like me, so I avoided him. In fact, when he shared at a meeting, I would get up and go to the kitchen for a cup of coffee or to daydream about something else. I felt that nothing he had to say would be useful to me or help me stay sober.

So there I was in my friend's apartment on Christmas Day. She was not in AA. She was not an alcoholic. I knew there was alcohol in the place but she had put it away in deference to my budding sobriety. If I looked hard enough, I knew I would find it, though.

As my "poor me's" about the loss of my job, my home and my family set in, suddenly I remembered something I had heard at a meeting. It was actually something Jerry the Professor had told about his first sober Christmas and waking up alone. Somehow, he had gotten the idea that helping someone else might keep him sober. He had driven to the Salvation Army soup kitchen and volunteered his time, serving homeless people and driving meals to shut-ins. I couldn't remember when and where he had told this story but right then it was a godsend to me.

I didn't have a car anymore but that, and the fact that the

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CONCEPT XII

The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that it's actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

Tradition Twelve - "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

In the Eye of the Storm With nowhere to go and unable to

make it home, she had to depend on the kindness of strangers

This past winter in Indiana was literally one for the record books, bringing record-breaking temperatures (it got down to 45 below zero, with 60 mile-per-hour winds) snowfalls lasting days and accumulating in drifts of snow over three feet high. There were icy conditions in the midst of all of that, making roads treacherous, and difficult to maneuver safely.

I began a new job last October as an information and referral specialist in a part time capacity. The calls we take are usually for social services and non-profit agencies, and we find solutions for the callers' issues. The operation runs 24 hours a day, every day, even holidays and weekends. We are also first responders in times of disasters, storms—making attendance very important.

When the news agencies began broadcasting the upcoming storm, I knew I was scheduled to arrive in the city just as it would start coming down. We are on a point system for attendance, and I wanted to be prepared in hopes of not missing work. I was nervous driving in it, as it is 24 miles to work, part of that through the country, part of it on a highway. I put my prayers and faith out there, and headed in on a Friday morning. I packed an overnight bag, a blanket and pillow, my little fan I have to have when I sleep, some food, and my diet soda. (Yes, I still have a drink in my hand all the time!) The plan was to stay with a friend's sponsor, who lives fairly close to where I work, and whom I had never met. I thought it was awe-some to be in a Fellowship where staying with a stranger was not really staying with a stranger, and I was very grateful when she offered.

The drive to work was uneventful at 6:00 a.m. The snow started coming down at about 10:00 a.m., and it was so thick I could not see the building next to us outside the window. I clocked out at 2:00 p.m., and since the snowfall had started later than predicted, decided to attempt to make it home, hoping the snow plows were keeping up with the storm. A mile into my trek, several cars were slipping and sliding, getting stuck, and I almost got stuck myself at an intersection, and the snow had not let up. I decided to head back to the office, and contact my source for a night in town.

In the meantime, there were reports of power outages and car wrecks all over the city. The temperature was rapidly falling below zero degrees, and the winds had picked up substantially, causing blowing and drifting of the snow that had just been plowed. I sent a text to my AA contact to see what time she would be home from work. Within a few minutes, she responded that she was not going to make it home and that there was no power in her neighborhood, and she was staying at her place of employment for the night.

Back at work, I unloaded my car, and carried my provisions inside, thinking that it had come to me sleeping on a palette on the floor, and just staying there, where we still had power and heat. I decided to try to take a nap, so I could get up and help man the phones in case the evening shift could not make it in. Power went out in our building shortly after I made it back to the office, but since we are first responders in times of crisis; our generators kicked in and kept the phones, lights, and computers humming. The authorities had already called an "Emergency only" travel by that time. I had almost drifted off when a coworker came in the office I was camped out in and told me that we were closing the building (this had never happened since they started the 24/7 schedule) because the generator was not connected to furnace that heats the building, and the temperature in the office was falling rapidly. They did not know when power would be restored, so they told everyone to go home.

Now I was totally out of options. I did not want to go searching for a hotel room, nor spend money on a room if I didn't have to, but I had to find someplace to go. Janet, a co-worker, invited me to her home, which was fairly close to work. I do not think we had spoken to each other before that day (Continued on page 3)

Suite 404 is a monthly publication of Broward County Intergroup, Inc. (BCI). The opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of BCI or AA as a whole. The deadline for submission is the 15th of each month. Material may be edited for space and content. We welcome your stories, news and comments. Please send your submissions to help@aabroward.org.

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nearest Salvation Army shelter was 40 miles away, didn't stop me. I bundled up and hit the road with my thumb out. The fact that it was Christmas probably inspired drivers to stop for me and I made it into Hartford in three rides.

What if they don't need any help? I thought as I neared the soup kitchen. But my fear was unfounded. I was welcomed with open arms and put to work. I sliced turkeys and ladled gravy, waiting on tables set up for transients. I washed dishes, pots and pans. The day passed quickly.

When the last folks had been served and had left, we volunteers sat down to eat. Besides the Salvation Army folks, there were three lovely ladies who had worked as hard as I had all day. Now, shed of their aprons, I saw that they were tastefully dressed, their hair coiffed. They wore expensive jewelry. I felt dowdy in my worn jeans and faded sweatshirt, but they were friendly and asked me where I lived and so on. I burst into tears and confessed that I was just an alcoholic trying to stay sober and that was the only reason I had come in to help.

All three of them laughed. "So are we, sweetie!" one woman said. "You're one of us," another said. "I might have known."

A feeling of gratitude like nothing I had felt before came over me. I was truly blessed. The ladies and I left together and went to a nearby meeting, after which they drove me back to my friend's apartment, which was way out of their way. No way would they have me hitchhike in the dark, they said.

As I said my prayers before climbing into bed, I added, "God bless you, Jerry the Professor."

—Bonnie R., Ashe County, NC Copyright© AA Grapevine, Inc. December 2017 Reprinted with permission.

(continued from page 2)

as we work different shifts usually, and the job itself does not lend itself to much socializing. I really did not like this option, but I was obviously not in charge that day, so I thanked her, and followed her home. That was an adventure: both of us got stuck twice and kind strangers pushed us out and we made our way to her warm house. Her lights and heat were still on, which was a miracle because the news reported that over 35,000 people in Indianapolis were without power.

The next morning, Jeffrey got up when he heard me stir, and went down to the kitchen and made coffee. I joined him and we made small talk. I do not remember how we got around to it, but he shared with me that he and Janet are recovering alcoholics. He had just celebrated six years, and she had eight months back after a slip following on 20 years of sobriety.

It had been difficult for her, and she really needed someone to talk to. Ever get God Bumps? I did in that moment. I went back upstairs to get ready for work, and then saw her Big Book, 12 and 12, and Al-Anon books on the nightstand. I missed all of that the night before, probably due to being so exhausted. All pretense and being uncomfortable vanished, I was now in the home of friends. It was amazing! We hugged and laughed and basked in the Sunlight of the Spirit!

I left to go into work, seeing that the main roads were passable, but, unfortunately, the intersections were piled up from the plows, and my little car got stuck at the end of their block. So, Janet and I decided to try to go in together.

That night, Jeffrey made us all dinner, and then we sat and talked about a little bit of everything. Janet and I connected, and she was able to take a look at where she was, and where she wanted to be. We had a meeting in her living room, her boyfriend stepping out of the room when he sensed we needed privacy.

On the third day of the storm, I went out to heat up my car, and it simply would not start. Jeffrey made a wonderful hot breakfast. Managers came and picked us up, taking us back at the end of our shifts. While I was at work, Jeffrey was able to get my battery charged back up and warmed up my car. By Sunday

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District 9 General Service P.O. Box 100126

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

Recovery Word Puzzle

SALTSBITANU
SISTORSADU
GEIAKNANW
TEENIMTICN
LIPSCASETI
VANERUME



Unscramble the letters. Answers to puzzle can be found on page 7. Words for this puzzle have been used somewhere else in this edition of Suite 404.

HILTSGUN SEEPNETR NEEDOCTNC GIVEROTHN LAPTRISIU ONEDIMTNE



Broward County Intergroup's Sober Camping Conference

to be held at Hugh Birch State Park in Ft. Lauderdale, April 1-3, 2022

Will have the first planning meeting on Zoom, December 15th at 6:30 PM

We need volunteers to serve on various committees. Come sign up and serve.

Zoom ID 241 331 6306 PW 6Hzur4

2022 Florida State Convention to be held on Fort Lauderdale Beach STILL NEEDS VOLUNTEERS...NEXT PLANNING MEETING

The Center for Spiritual Living 4849 North Dixie Hwy, Oakland Park, FL 33334 Mask required if not vaccinated (facility rules)

Hybrid option Available

Saturday, January 22, 2022 at 9:00 AM

More info, Chair2022fsc@gmail.com

SERVICE KEEPS YOU SOBER





A.A. Birthdays

December Celebrants

Broward Men's

Corey ~ 18 yrs. Eric L. ~ 18 yrs. John B. ~ 46 yrs.

Women's Honesty Kirstie ~ 10 yrs.

Oakland Park Group David R. ~ 29 yrs.

Happy Hour 5:45 Jason W. ~ 7 yrs.

Fritz A. ~ 4 yrs.

Serenity Altogether
Paul R. ~ 27 yrs.

Y.A.N.A.

Sarah N. ~ 25 yrs. Paul W. ~ 17 yrs.

One Day at a Time

Ernie B. ~ 35 yrs.

Mountain Group

Mark J. ~ 24 yrs.

Sunlight of the Spirit

Tom J. ~ 33 yrs. Violet ~ 5 yrs. Brian S. ~ 13 yrs.

Why It Works

Michael W. ~ 33 yrs.

Back to Basics

John A. ~ 24 yrs.

A Step at a Time

Chirs B. ~ 20 yrs.

Margate Group

Adam B. ~ 10 yrs. Dennis B. ~ 36 yrs.

Express Group

Nereida ~ 10 yrs. Joanna ~ 27 yrs.

Other Notables

Suzanne J. ~ 16 yrs.
Dani A. ~ 12 yrs.
Laura F. ~ 22 yrs.
Nancy F. ~ 20 yrs.
Luanne C. ~ 36 yrs.
Allison B. ~ 10 yrs.
Dennis W. ~ 21 yrs.
Chris S. ~ 10 yrs.

Imperial Point Sunday Night

Joyce D. ~ 18 yrs. Billy D. ~ 32 yrs. Joey C. ~ 23 yrs.

Happy Destiny

Arielle ~ 10 yrs.

Women's Step by Step

Heather M. ~ 8 yrs. Tracy S. ~ 12 yrs.

Victor E

Larry M. ~ 33 yrs.

Freedom From Alcohol

Karl B. ~ 30 yrs.

Each Day a New Beginning

Mark L. ~ 7 yrs.

November Celebrants not

previously mentioned

Spiritual Principles

Gale D. ~ 17 yrs. Horacio V. ~ 30 yrs. Judy N. ~ 38 yrs.

Spiritual Principles

Bonnie Lee ~ 24 yrs. Kate K. ~ 41 yrs.

Living in the Solution

Loretta W. ~ 1 yr. Thommy A. ~ 2 yrs. Holly S. ~ 3 yrs. Victor C. ~ 3 yrs. AI G. ~ 4 yrs. Annie ~ 5 yrs. Dan H. ~ 18 yrs. Ritchie M. ~ 15 yrs.

Downtown Dry Dock

Cindy K. ~ 32 yrs. Colleen L. ~ 23 yrs.

5-3-Zero Group

Dana C. ~ 26 yrs.

Saturday Morning Awareness

Christine H. ~ 19 yrs.

Coconut Creek Group Robin C. ~ 33 yrs.

Easier Softer Way Arianna G. ~ 3 yrs.

As Bill Sees It

Jen R. ∼ 9 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.)

GOODBYE

2021

BCIC

Broward County Institutions Committee will hold their next meeting on

Saturday, December 11th 10:00 AM

Twelve Step House, December 11, 205 SW 23rd St., Ft. Lauderdale

The next **Intergroup Meeting** will be the LAST HYBRID meeting

Sunday, December 19th

at 1 PM

Zoom ID 241 331 6306 PW 6Hzur4

Twelve Step House 205 SW 23rd St., Ft. Lauderdale (continued from page 3)

afternoon, more and more staff were able to get in to work, and the heat had been reinstated. I left to go home, and felt somewhat sad that I could not stay longer. I felt truly that welcome in their home.

Since Janet's slip, she needed someone to talk to, someone outside of her group of women, just someone to listen.

Twenty-one years into living the AA program, I am still always humbled and awed by the way God works in my life and in those around me. This winter was horrendous, but it turned into a situation from which we all benefitted, and I made two more lifelong friends. This whole ordeal was such a blessing, and another reminder that his plan is always much better than mine. It is just a matter of letting go and doing the next right thing. It is proof that this Fellowship is everywhere, even in the eye of a storm.

——Kari O., Greenfield, IN Copyright© AA Grapevine, Inc. April 2015 Reprinted with permission.

Did You Hear About Sally?

Hi, my name is Mickey and I'm an alcoholic." I had no sooner spoken these words at a meeting of my home group then I looked out at the people seated in the room and recognized a new woman.

I was in my fourth year of sobriety and had recently started a new job that required me to train and supervise several women—one of whom had just shown up for her first AA meeting! I had very mixed feelings during the course of the meeting: gratitude that Sally had found her way to a meeting, concern about my anonymity, and fear that I might not be able to separate my job as her supervisor from my concern for her as a fellow alcoholic. I approached her after the meeting and told her I was glad to see her, and hoped she would "keep coming back."

Sally did not come back. She decided, based on one meeting, that she didn't need Alcoholics Anonymous. Soon, however, I started getting questions from other employees which made it clear that Sally hadn't respected my anonymity—though, after attending only one meeting, she probably didn't know what anonymity was. Fortunately I'd been honest with my boss about my alcoholism, and having my anonymity broken did not cause any problems with retaining my job or the confidence of my employer. And, contrary to my fears, it didn't appear to diminish my effectiveness as a supervisor. After a few questions and comments, the other employees seemed to dismiss it as unimportant.

The area that I had to work on, as usual, was me. I felt immediate resentment toward Sally, based on both her rejection of the Fellowship which had saved my life and what I saw as her betrayal of my personal trust. It took hours of personal inventory, sharing with other alcoholics, and praying for my Higher Power to remove my character defects of pride, fear, self-righteousness and personal judgment to finally let go of my resentment.

During this time I was able to use one of the other tools that I'd been taught in sobriety. I was able to not act on my resentment. I'd been taught that feelings are real but not necessarily based on anything valid, and that I didn't have to act out my feelings—that frequently it was better to defer taking any action until the feeling had subsided and I could act using the principles of the program.

I made a conscious effort to treat Sally in the same way I treated every other person I supervised. I put aside my personal feelings and evaluated her based strictly on her job performance. I treated her with the same courtesy and respect I tried to show to all of those with whom I worked. And eventually, when I left that job, I felt good about the way in which I'd demonstrated sobriety to the people who knew that I was an alcoholic and a member of AA.

As far as I know, Sally never came back to Alcoholics Anonymous. Several years after leaving the office where we both had worked I ran into a coworker and was catching up on news about the people we'd worked with. "Did you hear about Sally?" she said. "She died recently of liver failure. She'd been drinking a lot."

I was saddened by this news, as I am always saddened when I hear of someone dying of the disease of alcoholism, particularly when I know they were given the opportunity to recover and for whatever reason have been unable to remain sober. But I also felt that I didn't have to regret my treatment of Sally. I didn't have to feel that any action of mine had prevented her from returning to Alcoholics Anonymous. I had honestly tried to carry the AA message and to practice these principles in all my affairs. I knew gratitude in that moment that I had been given the spiritual gift of placing the principles of AA before my personality.

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

(Easy to set up with your bank or through PayPal)

Thank you to our Faithful Fivers and all our Contributors! You are all so appreciated!

Tom J	James H.	Brian H.	Al G.	Fred L.	Cassandre D.	Kerry W.	Ed H.	Gina B.
Liz J	Gerry B.	Steven L.	Glen P.	Laura E.	Drew B.	Marsha M.	Thomas J.	Marcy B.
Gregory C.	Robert H.	Barbara S.	Richard M.	Janine C.	Valerie J.	Maggie H.	Sandy R.	Wilma D.
Suzanne J.	Don W.	Jenae R.	Ali S.	Sheila C.	Giselle P.	Jim S.	Gayle K.	Anne B.
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Craig G.	Marlene A.	Joe G.	Sharon G.	Gil W.	Michael P.	Paul A.	Christine Y.	Dianne N.
Vickie T.	Ernie F.	Nancy S.	Jeff H.	Nancy M.	Nancy N.	Robert M.	Barbaree K.	Justine H.
Howie K.	HBeta	Mary S.	Paul	Trish F.	E - Walter	Sam B.	Karen L.	Laurey T.
Sheldon V.	Ronald B.	Allison B.	Victoria M.	Robert A.	George O.	Dan M.	Michael B.	Adie M.
Stephen H.	Dennis G.	Ellen F.	Robert S.	Nancy G.	Gwendolyn			

Answers from page 4: substantial, disastrous, awakening, incitement, specialist, maneuver, sunlight, pretense, connected, overnight, Spiritual, mentioned

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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 FRI	IDAY: WEEKENDS:
8:00am-12:00pm 12:00pm-5	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

Definition of Broward County Intergroup, Inc.Your Intergroup office services all groups in the Broward County area. It is not a governing body and does not attempt to, nor can it, rule any AA Group. Its sole purpose is to act as a clearinghouse for the convenience of members and groups desiring assistance, and to extend the Twelve Step Work "carrying the message" to the sick alcoholic. The Intergroup office is supported entirely by contributions from groups, usually a specified amount each month or at intervals throughout the year.

The office purchases and sells all conference-approved books and literature to groups throughout Broward County.

MEETING CHANGES

Monday

<u>Davie Women's</u> is now meeting live again at St. David's Catholic Church in Davie at 7 PM, 3900 S. University Drive, 2nd Floor.

Tuesday

Veterans in Recovery which met at Twelve Step House in Ft. Lauderdale NO LONGER MEETS.

St. Francis Men's which met at Twelve Step House in Ft. Lauderdale at noon NO LONGER MEETS.

NEW MEETING First Steps Beginners NO LONGER MEETS at Lambda South Club.

NEW MEETING Sisters Staying Sober Fellowship Recovery Ctr., 5900 W Atlantic Blvd., Margate. 7 PM, Ow.

Wednesday

Sober Sisters is now meeting live again at Lambda South Club, 1231 E Las Olas, Ft. Lauderdale 7 PM.

Women's Step Into Sobriety is now live again at Dania Women's Club, 17 NW 1 Ave, Dania. CRFw—Hybrid.

Thursday

NEW MEETING First Steps Beginners NO LONGER MEETS at Lambda South Club in Ft. Lauderdale.

Friday

North Broward Speaker Meeting which met at Danny's Halfway in Pompano NO LONGER MEETS.

Touristique (French) is now meeting again at Trinity Lutheran Church in Pembroke Pines. 8 PM.

Saturday

<u>Welcome Home Beginners</u> that meets at Twelve Step House in Ft. Lauderdale will now meet for an hour and a half from 6 PM -7:30 PM.

Rule 62 which only meets online, now is going back to Sundays at 6 PM.

NEW MEETING First Steps Beginners NO LONGER MEETS at Lambda South Club.

<u>Lauderdale by the Sea</u> meeting has moved to Deerfield. They now meet at the Community Presbyterian Church office at 1920 SE 4th Street.

Sunday

Sunday Night Group (French) is now meeting at Sober Today Club in Hollywood. 8 PM.

Daily

<u>Lunch Bunch</u> now holds two (2) separate but simultaneous meetings....they are not Hybrid. You can either go to the online meeting, or you can go to St. Benedict's Episcopal Church in Plantation. 12:30 PM Mon-Sat.

<u>Living in the Solution</u> is now meeting live again at St. David's Catholic Church in Davie at 8 AM, 3900 S. University Drive, 2nd Floor.

<u>Mid Day Sobriety</u> is now meeting live again at St. David's Catholic Church in Davie, Mon-Fri at noon, 3900 S. University Drive, 2nd Floor.

Bottom Line Group has meetings every night at 7 PM, but there is no Chair on Sun—Thurs. Building is open. **Nuevo Porvenir** is now meeting live again in Pembroke Pines, 1466 S. Palm Avenue. (Spanish).

Buscando Humilidad (Spanish) is now meeting live again at West Broward Club in Davie on M/W/F 8:30 PM.



Wishing you all sober, joyful holidays filled with blessings.

Upcoming Events

- **Jan. 14-16** S.Fla. Area 15 General Service Assembly will finally be live again in Sarasota. Go to Area15aa.org for more info.
- **Apr. 1-3 SCC2022** Broward County Intergroup's first Sober Camping Conference. Hugh Birch State Park. Save the date! Only 118 overnight spots. Details coming soon.