

PROMISES



A PUBLICATION OF THE FLAGLER COUNTY INTERGROUP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Beverly Beach Bunnell Daytona North Espanola Flagler Beach Hammock Marineland Palm Coast Painters Hill

MARCH/APRIL 2011 ISSUE

Helpline: 445-HELP (386-445-4357) - E-Mail: taragower@gmail.com Web Access: www.aaflagler.org - P.O. Box 352470, Palm Coast, FL 32135

Taking Action: Steps 4 & 5

My first AA meeting was all about taking peoples inventory. I reviewed the steps and traditions hanging on the wall, and estimated 2 to 3 weeks and I would be done—except for steps 4 and 5. Those I would skip. After all, the only real problem I had was drinking too much too often and the only person I had harmed was myself. Obviously I had not “joined” AA yet and was thoroughly confused. I ignored the suggestions I heard at that first meeting and tossed the names and phone numbers in the trash. I heard 90 meetings in 90 days and getting a sponsor but I just wanted to hang out until the heat was off. After all, I had stopped drinking once before all on my own for a whole year during my first marriage. I was now working a lot and couldn't make that many meetings and getting a sponsor was too personal for me. I just needed a little help to avoid losing my family, job and home.

Relying on willpower and my ego, I drank 10 days after throwing those numbers in the trash. I couldn't do it. My family in Michigan told my wife to kick me out, but not to send me back to Michigan because they didn't want me. I was once again removed from another relationship. This last



drunk scared me to death because I was trying to avoid a drink to the best of my ability. I was defeated this time. My wife gave me one last chance to get help, so I crawled back to AA.

Sick, tired, scared, hopeless and desperate, I approached a man after this second meeting who had what I wanted and quietly asked him to be my sponsor. I called him the next evening as he requested and we talked about my drinking. My sponsor said to attend a meeting a day and check in with him each evening as I

was leaving work.

The program began to get a hold of me. By the time I reached the 4th step, I had been attending a meeting a day for over a year, was involved in service and checked in with my sponsor daily. I was developing a relationship with my sponsor built on honesty and trust which was critical for me with all the steps but especially important with steps 4 and 5. I began my 4th step “Big Book” style being as honest as I could. It just didn't seem thorough enough and I was a little frustrated. Nonetheless, I handed the 4th step pages to my sponsor and a few days later received them back as he stated it was a good start, but needed more detail.

He then suggested I try autobiography style as he had done with his sponsor. For me, this method proved to be a more thorough approach and flowed with all my character defects and liabilities including specific instances and memories from my past. I had promised myself at the onset that whatever came to mind as I put pen to paper would be written no matter how embarrassing or crazy.

Story continued top of page 3-

AA Help Line

Total for December 2010—January 2011
AA Information 83 calls — AA Help 12 calls
Alanon Information 7 calls — Other 3 calls
Total of 105 calls for December and January!





FLAGLER COUNTY ANNIVERSARIES



<u>Foot Prints Sand</u> <i>Belated January</i> Annie B. 24 Kevin P. 21 <u>Another Open</u> <i>Belated January</i> Jim M. 40	<u>Men's Nomad</u> MARCH Chuck A. 38 Dutch D. 8 Howie B. 26 Jim O. 29 Kenny K. 44 Rick G. 26 Zeke Z. 22 APRIL Jim G. 18	<u>Survivor Group</u> <i>Belated February</i> Duke 25 Tim A. 14 Dewey M. 33 Shanda F. 4 Ed T. 9 Peg V. 21 MARCH Jode P. 4 Betty C. 3 APRIL Paul C. 25 Micheal 21	<u>Survivors Cont..</u> Henry P. 13 Jeff R. 10 Chuck O. 22 Happy Hour <i>Belated February</i> Suzy M. 1 Alex 1 APRIL Richard T. 29 Karen 1	<u>Women's Accept.</u> MARCH Ellen 1 Rosemary 21 Lori H. 4 Donna 13 Virginia M. 18 APRIL Sally W. 27 Sandy P. 9 Jay W. 19 Kim 3	<u>TGIF</u> MARCH George S. 57 Nell S. 3 Ellen 1 Tim G. 1 Chuck A. APRIL Grace K. 24 David B. 4 Edi S. 1
<u>Happy Wanderers</u> APRIL Johnny "L". 33 Amanda 2					

<u>Jumpstart</u> <i>Belated January</i> Marchin W. 1 Annie B. 24 Corey J. 2 Ron R. 5 <i>Belated February</i> Jeff 18 Wendee 2 MARCH Carol F. 6 Dora H. 4 Dutch D. 8 Howie B. 26	<u>Jumpstart Cont.</u> Rick G. 26 Webb 6 APRIL Jackie M. 31 Jimmy B. 7 Stacey P. 3	<u>Lucky to be Here</u> APRIL Jim H. 10 Pam H. 28
		<u>Morning Magic</u> APRIL Amanda G. 2
	<u>Women to Women</u> MARCH Ellen S. 1 Midge G. 36	

The 3 S's: Steps, Sponsorship and Service
 March 5th, 9:00 am -3:00 pm
Palm Coast Community Center (350 palm coast parkway NE)
 Free workshop, bring your own lunch.
 Donations Accepted-Thank You.

District 22 Archives
 Anyone who may be in possession of literature, data, artifacts etc. concerning the following Groups: *Stormy Seas, As Bill Sees It, West Flagler, The Lemac, Calm Seas, Sunday Sober Women, Saturday Night Live, Sandiper, Early Riser, Message (Flagler Beach) or District 22/InterGroup related to it's affiliation w/Daytona & St Augustine InterGroups*, please consider contributing them to District 22 Archives.
Contact Peter Flaherty at 446-8801 or rebos7@bellsouth.net

Notice to all Group Treasurers
 The name and address for contributions to The North Florida Area Assembly has changed. Area Assembly is now called the N F Area Conference. **All checks should include your Group's registration number & be addressed to :**
NFAC P.O. Box 8983 Jacksonville, FL 32239-8983.

Service Group Meeting Schedules 2011
Intergroup: Meets the first Monday of the month at 6:30PM
District 22: Meets the last Monday of the month at 6:30PM.
 The meetings are held at the Florida Hospital Flagler, Classroom C, in the Lind Educational Center.

Next Quarterly Area Assembly April 8th—10th 2011
**The North Florida Area Assembly has moved from The Paramount Hotel in Gainesville, to The Renaissance Hotel at World Golf Village, in St. Augustine.*

Reminder:
 Need Literature and Medallions?
Contact: Don H. 386-986-3659
hoodyfour@aol.com

Continued from Page 1 Taking Action: All my insecurities and secrets poured out onto the paper as I emptied my head of all the nagging noise that rattled around up there for years. However, as I wrote, I reached the darkest point of my past when old feelings of anger and resentment crept into my head and I stopped writing.

Over a month went by as my sponsor would periodically ask how progress was coming, and I told him it was difficult. I was becoming more irritable and discontent with each day of procrastination. As I explained my issue he recommended we attend a 4th step workshop being held in Ormond that week, (funny how God and the AA Program work). It was at this workshop I heard the facilitator state that the 4th step is where many members go back out and my ears perked up. By this time my sobriety was more important to me than anything.

I was recommitted to completing my 4th and my sponsor placed a deadline for completion. I met the deadline with 1 day to spare. I told him I wanted the pages out of my hands, and upon delivery, asked him if we could complete the 5th step soon. He hugged me and said sure, how about next weekend. 6 days later on my sponsors rear patio, we knelt and prayed together inviting God to my 5th step asking him for courage and honesty. We proceeded to review my 4th step which was now covered in red ink with my sponsors comments and thoughts. We pulled apart and took a close look at the items in my 4th and discussed in great length my part in all of my past behavior. He helped me to understand some of the confusing aspects of my past, and helped me to honestly review my motives and feelings. He offered new ways of looking at my past that made everything more clear. I was now confessing to another human being, before God, the exact nature of my wrongs in a very comfortable and honest manner.

I wasn't judged, criticized or embarrassed. We laughed, cried and he even shared some of his similar experiences with me. For the first time in my life I realized I wasn't alone. My sponsor then explained to me that I was a "garden variety drunk". I wasn't so unique after all. He explained that I was not a bad person getting better, but a sick person getting well, and suggested I read Steps 6 and 7. All this was possible because I had a sponsor I could trust. We then sat down to a dinner of macaroni and cheese. What a blessing.

—Darren M

Step 11: A Continuation of our Spiritual Journey

When I came to the program of Alcoholics Anonymous I expressed the desire for a lot of things which seemed to be important "needs" and more importantly many priority "wants." As I grew spiritually and found out about a Power Greater than myself, I began to realize that as long as my spiritual needs are truly met, my living problems are reduced to a point of comfort.

As I moved through the 12 Steps most of my priorities changed and I began to become satisfied with quite a bit less than I once thought necessary for an adequate lifestyle. I eventually redefined my beliefs and understanding to the point where I see that my greatest need is for knowledge of my Higher Power's *Will for me and the power to carry that out*. When I began to achieve even a modicum of this, it began to give me a great sense of inner peace—I could call off my various wars with the world!

I am now able to set aside some of my personal preferences, if necessary, to do this because I've learned that my Higher Power's Will consists of the very things I care most about. My Higher Power's Will for me becomes my own true will for myself. This happens in an intuitive, experiential manner which, I feel, cannot be adequately explained in words. It is something along the lines of a gradual spiritual awakening as opposed to the spiritual "flash of light" experience. Although I guess either will work. My Higher Power's Will for me becomes my own true will for myself.

Step 11 continues this spiritual journey by adding two important tools: prayer and meditation. The recovering alcoholic is to use them to tap into the daily direction of their Higher Power, however they choose to define that term. Through prayer and meditation I am simply asking and listening -- asking for that Power's guidance and listening for a response. Prayer is when I talk to my Higher Power and meditation is when I listen, become receptive. Prayer is not foreign to many AA folks. It has its roots in the organized religion of their youth or something they joined as a young adult or even since becoming a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. But we are also asked to do something that many of us do not wish to do— meditate.

This practice has much negative baggage associated with it. It is best to remember that old adage that is on the walls of many AA meeting places:

"There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance - that principle is contempt prior to investigation."

Today with computers at the disposal of everyone there is ample information available to the beginner in their meditation journey. Keep it simple. As with so many things in Alcoholics Anonymous there is no "wrong" there is just progress. This can be a wonderful enhancement to anyone's recovery program, no matter how many days they have accumulated "*one day at a time.*"

—Anonymous

Today's Headline: What would AA look like without Tradition 8?

Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

The **8th Tradition** insures that any time a newcomer reaches out for help, he or she will receive it, free of charge. Members freely share their own experience, strength, and hope with the newcomer and by doing so, help themselves by reinforcing their own recovery in the process. If there was no **8th Tradition** we might see a headline saying:

AA has Changed the Way their Doing Things

– New York, Jan. 01, 2011

Due to the downturn in the economy, Alcoholics Anonymous will NO LONGER be dues and membership free, as has been the case for over 75 years. Like many businesses, AA will now be charging for some things that used to be free, such as:

1. Being Rocketed into the 4th Dimension - \$49.99 per trip, fuel surcharge applies, extra baggage NOT included. 5th Dimension trips optional; additional fee applies. See your sponsor for details.
2. Sponsorship - was free, NOW \$9.99 per month, with 4 visits/20 phone calls per month free, after that, \$2.00 each. Surcharge for calls after midnight: \$1.50 per call.
3. Membership Dues - now \$29.99/month, 10% discount for a 1-year plan.
4. Seating charges - Each seat now \$1.00 per meeting, with a 20% discount for the 90-in-90 plan.
5. Pink Cloud - was free, NOW \$14.99 per cloud, with a \$5.00 per event environmental cleanup fee. These are the NEW ozone-free Pink Clouds that do NOT add to global warming.
6. Coffee - \$1.50 per cup, with a 10% discount for 5 or more cups.
7. Hugs - will now be \$2.50 each. (These are for the higher quality "no burping" hugs.)
8. Conscious Contact with God - now \$9.99/month, with the first 450 minutes free, then 10 cents/minute over 450.

The new Double your Minutes for Life plan is a low \$49.99 one time charge. Holidays and weekends extra; see rate schedule, as God is VERY busy.

9. Accidental cell phone call during meeting - charge now set at \$25.00 per incident. Intentional calls: \$75.00

10. "I've been thinking" fees to now be \$3.00 each, with a Relapse Reentry Fee of only \$99.99 (each occurrence), if you're lucky enough to make it back into the rooms. Fees will be used to purchase additional beginner white chips and Big Book.

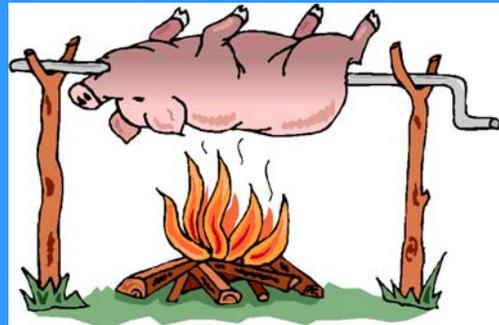
Kind of makes you think twice about how lucky we are that they decided to have the **8th Tradition** and not professionalize A.A. Imagine having to pay for a professional sponsor? We probably have the only disease whose cure has not been commercialized. Makes us special and lucky. But, it's *so easy* to think that the cure isn't worth its weight in gold because we don't have to pay big bucks for it!

—Anonymous

*Get the most up to date meeting schedule for
Flagler county at:*

www.AAFlagler.org

18th Annual Sober Hog Roast & Live Music



March 6th 12-5pm 2512 Orange Street Bunnell, FL

This is a family event. Free admission, bring a dish or canned soda to share. Camping available, all welcome.

Contact (386) 437-0373 FERG@CFL.RR.COM

Flagler County Promises 2011

Submissions to the Promises is another way to be of service! Thank you to every one who helped create this issue.

**Next Promises Deadline is APRIL 1st, 2011
for the MAY/JUNE 2011 issue.**

All material and information for the newsletter must be received by the 1st of the even months.

2011 deadlines will be February, April, June, August, October, December .

Submit any questions, articles, anniversaries & ideas to:
taragower@gmail.com or call Tara G. at 386-931-8129