



PROMISES



A PUBLICATION OF THE FLAGLER COUNTY INTERGROUP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2015

My name is Gary, and I am an alcoholic

My sobriety date is July 8, 1998, and the gratitude that I feel for this fellowship, The 12 Steps, My Higher Power, and the characters that have crossed my path in the Rooms still fills my heart. I have learned that one of the keys to sobriety is this Gratitude, and I must find it when it is not forthcoming.

I always suspected that I was alcoholic; my generation had the benefit of the common knowledge of AA, and recovery type organizations. The radio ads asking: "Do you have a drinking problem?", and the television commercials during the holidays about being depressed and alone; I remember thinking to myself: yep...I'm a drunk. But that wasn't my main problem I thought. My problem is that I'm nuts.

Not just nuts, but exceptionally nuts. So uniquely nuts, that I was convinced that I had a special malady only inherent to me. I was convinced that when I finally died, some brilliant Asian scientists would dissect me and they would look at my rare disorder with horror, amazement, and wonder. They would write a medical paper on what a phenomenal disorder it was, how unique, and horrible, and what poor Gary must have gone through. The medical world would gape in awe at my affliction and a whole new medical discipline would be created! Of course, back home, the flags would be at half mast, my elementary school would have a moment of silence in my honor, and there would be a parade honoring their poor, misunderstood, and cursed, fallen son. I really believed this; in actuality, not one street light would flicker at my demise.

The Truth is, I am a garden-variety drunkard: an unexceptional soul that happens to have the disease of alcoholism. A living problem.

Growing up in the 60's and 70's in Utah was an idyllic "Leave It to Beaver" existence. I enjoyed a stable home and loving family. The neurosis that comes with living in an ultra-religious area grew fangs; guilt was everywhere, around every corner. The constant pressure to conform, play the part, and succeed in The Club was all consuming. I was a squirrely, creative kid that had a difficult time fitting in with the groups around me. In true alcoholic fashion I became a chameleon; morphing through my adolescence. Then I discovered the solution to my plight...alcohol.

As Dr. Bob relates in his story, alcohol was the panacea for all of my issues. It was the solution for everything, and became my best friend, lover, and confidante. I became its slave. My friends and those around me were growing up, working, paying bills, stopping for red lights, going to school, travelling, and starting families. Gary was firmly ensconced in Garyland. My adolescence was spent in fear, delusion, resentment, and guilt. I was safe in Garyland...a warm blanket of fear and resentment.

I married twice to two wonderful women, had three beautiful children, and held several great jobs; even a promising music career. There is no doubt that I traded all of these for alcohol. I lost nothing, it was given away. In the fall of 1997, I took up residence in a parking lot in Porterville California, living in my 1984 Pontiac Sunbird. This was the apex of my majestic thinking. Leaving a smoldering wake in my path, my life was in flames. But I was still in control. As the days past, the quicksand spread around me, and like so many of us experience: suicide was now a viable option. I couldn't get drunk anymore, and certainly never considered sobriety; I was way too cursed and special for that! I would die in my Sunbird, one way or the other.

My life was soon to change. At the height of my disease, my older brother who had 15 years sobriety at the time reached out to me, and planted a seed. This seed would take, after another dear soul who I had met at the local mental health office, refused to buy my lies and arranged for me to get help. This tag-team saved my life, and I entered a treatment center on July 8, 1998.

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Helpline: 445-HELP (386-445-4357)

www.AAflagler.org

P.O. Box 351814, Palm Coast, FL 32135

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

Flagler County Anniversaries

**BELATED DUE TO
PRINTER ERROR :O(**

**NOMAD
SEPTEMBER:**
Fred G. 8 years

**JUMP START
OCTOBER:**
Lee M. 33 years

**LIFE'S A BEACH
NOVEMBER:**
Frank R. 3 years

**WOMENS ACCEPTANCE
NOVEMBER:**
Jewellean M. 27 years

**STEPPING SISTERS:
SEPTEMBER:**
Lena F. 3 years
Michelle F. 5 years

**LIVING SOBER:
NOVEMBER**
Fred R. 2 years
Chris B. 6 years
Suzanne G. 27 years

DECEMBER
Arnold P. 30 years

**MONDEX GROUP:
NOVEMBER**
Kevin F. 30 years
Connie G. 22 years

DECEMBER
Merrill S. 10 years

**KEEP IT SPIRITUALLY
SIMPLE:
NOVEMBER**
Connie G. 22 years

**NOMAD GROUP:
NOVEMBER**
Andy D. 19 years
Carl B. 31 years
Dave R. 17 years

DECEMBER
Jerry K. 24 years

**WOMEN TO WOMEN
AUGUST BELATED**
Barb O - 34 years
Pat P - 2 years

SEPTEMBER BELATED
Michelle F. 5 years
Pat M. - 6 years
Lena P. - 3 years

OCTOBER BELATED
Gayle E. 1 year

NOVEMBER
Suzanne G. 27 years
Pat C - 2 years
Laura B. - 1 year

**WOMEN'S ACCEPTANCE:
NOVEMBER**
Jewella Mc. 27 years

**TGIF:
NOVEMBER**
Brenda W. 30 years
Fred R. 2 years
Mardel A. 8 years
Bob H. 13 yrs

DECEMBER
Gary O. 32 years
Lance D. 26 years
Debbie F. 30 years

**MESSAGE GROUP:
NOVEMBER**
Mike J. 16 years

**JUMP START:
NOVEMBER**
Frank R. 3 years

Fred M. 8 years
Gregg W. 12 years

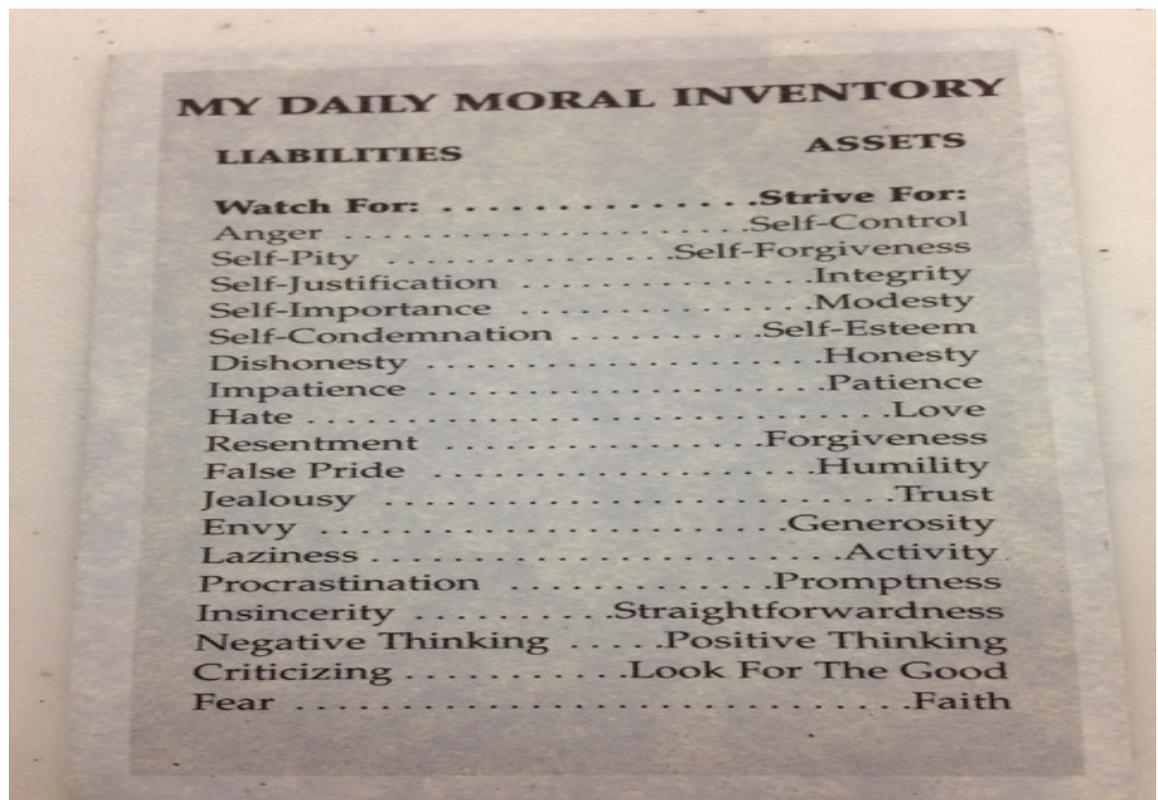
DECEMBER
Dennis M. 18 years

Jerry T. 10 years
Wendi M. 19 years

Elaine R. 6 years

**MONDAY NIGHT LIVE:
NOVEMBER**
Jean H. 26 years

DECEMBER
Rob M. 6 years
Dave C. 5 years
Jane M. 2 years



A time to rejoice, a time to be grateful. A true life.

My anniversary is November 13, 2009. The last time I put alcohol in my body.

To understand what has happened to my life, my emotions, my health, my relationship with my Partner, my daughters and my siblings. I have had to travel physically and emotionally through the 12 steps and 12 traditions of our Sacred program of Alcoholics Anonymous. My beautiful journey beginning at the hospital where I was treated for alcoholism to entering the saving room of Alcoholics Anonymous. At times I heard words that would create healing on the spot. At times I heard life stories that were a duplicate of my life with the bottle. I'm fortunate my God gave me an opportunity to bounce back and learn what alcohol was doing to me and to my family and friends. When I would drink I could hear the cries, but I couldn't stop. When I would drink I would hear the criticism but they were not strong enough to make me stop. Who? Where? How can I get help without being embarrassed of the label alcoholic.

The freedom came to me through the meetings. That was the formula. I shared enough to clean my soul piece by piece, meeting after meeting.

I cannot leave out the Promises because it validates my work and my serenity is extremely important for me to keep. The issues I have today with belligerent children is that I still have work to do there.

When you have an adult child repeating over and over again that she had to deal with my alcoholism and negates the sober person I've become. It hurts. But my unconditional love allows me to reflect and that quiet moment God puts the correct words I need to use to make an attempt in her accepting my help and forgiveness. Sometimes the 8th step comes to us, instead of us going to it.

I'm Rosie and I'm Powerless over alcohol. True story.

Happy anniversary to all our November celebrants.

November is a Thanksgiving month.

Peace, love, respect to all.

Announcements & Information

NEW MEETING

I Heard It Thru The Grapevine
Starting Wednesday, November 4th
@ 6:30 pm
St. Thomas Church
Come out and support it!!

Unfortunately, sad news.
The Happy Wanderers Group has ceased to be as of 8/25/15. Regrettably this 40 plus year old group, the oldest in the county, has folded it's tent & will no longer function as a group or hold meetings.

Reminder:

*Need Medallions
Or Literature?
Contact Don H.
386-986-3659
hoodyfour@aol.com*

*The Promises Editor position will become available starting December 16, 2015. In the spirit of rotation my time is up. I have really enjoyed my work as Editor for the past 2 years it was a great way to stay involved in service. If interested in the position please see the Intergroup Chairperson or myself.
Thank you again, Sue J.*

District 22 Archives

We would like information from 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 with Daytona & St. Augustine Intergroups. Please consider contributing them to District 22 Archives. Contact Peter Flaherty at 386-446-8801 or rebos7@bellsouth.net

Acronym for November and December: K.I.S.S. Keeping It Simply Spiritual

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My first meeting was that night, and I recall the chairman making a comment about how "God" helps him stay sober. What? This was something I had never considered! God taking a personal interest in me? Really? The idea was so profound that I was immediately drawn to the idea. No more angry despot hovering on his throne in the Heavens waiting to punish me when I screwed up, but a father, a dad, a friend. This was a paradigm shift in my life! I did what I was told. I began the Steps with a sponsor, had a Home Group, immersed myself in service, read the first 164 pages of our book, and I listened and watched. I gravitated toward the mean old bastards with time, rather than the cross-program gurus that were extremely pleased with themselves. The old timers told me the truth, rather than candy-coat recovery, and love me to death. It was exactly what I needed.

On my one year anniversary I went to Alaska to work the salmon season which was intended to last seven weeks. I ended up receiving a gold watch from this company for ten years employment. My Alaskan sponsors were tough, a little crazy and eccentric, but they guided me through early sobriety with an iron fist in a velvet glove. The fact was, if I did not double down on the Program, living in the real world, in a remote location in early sobriety, I would drink. The Steps were worked with zeal, but the longing for Garyland was always within reach. We depended on each other; the meetings in Alaska during the summer were flush with tourist alcoholics from all over the world. The winter meetings were small and on more than one occasion, I held hands with a lone burly fisherman as we ended our two-alcoholic meeting with the Lord's Prayer.

My life would soon explode in directions I had never dreamed of. In September of 2002, I completed a 4000 mile "9th Step" road trip in the western half of the country. This was an amazing experience and the 9th Step Promises came true...with interest. I was blessed with a new job in 2003 with my company which took me to a new home in Alaska, and allowed me to almost completely navigate the entire geographical area of the state, as well as the angry seas that surrounded it. In 2006 I relocated to Seattle where life once again exploded. My position took me to 15 % of the worlds countries travelling over 200 days a year. My home group and sponsor reintroduced the Spiritual Program to me, and the zeal of exploring the Spiritual in my life allowed me to live our 11th Step, and to concentrate on the art of prayer.

In 2010 I had the good fortune to relocate to Palm Coast Florida, where I immediately plugged into the Fellowship, and began sponsoring several alcoholics. To me, this was a blessing, and reinforced the bulwark of my sobriety. 2010 was a tough year, and became a financial failure. The plans that were in play were not working out, and I learned that *Self-Will* was at the core of my motives; I still picture HP laughing at my folly. The wonderful friends I made in Flagler County are still very special to me today, and I hope I will always retain the moniker of Gary #3.

An opportunity to return to Porterville of all places appeared courtesy of my Higher Power, and this is where I currently call Home. I have been blessed more than I deserve. The dreams of a home recording studio, releasing my first album in over 27 years, a great relationship with my kids and grandkids, and the ability to live in my own skin are but a few of the Gifts I have received. There have been difficulties such as losing both of my parents in the last two years, as well as losing many friends to this disease, but I have not had to pick up a drink. My drinking problem today was not a problem; it was lifted from me. I still have a Gary problem, so I continue to pray, attend meetings, and sponsor others.

I owe my life to God and the Program of Alcoholics Anonymous. I'm under *no* illusions as to waits for me outside of the Rooms. To blend all of the best council I have received from my sponsors over the years, I just need to: "Keep Coming Back", "Trust in God", "Trust the Process", "keep my ego right-sized", "Stay in Today", because, "It is What it Is", and, "Leave the Frickin Program Exactly the Way You Found it".

And of course...don't drink.

*"You are where you need to be.
Just breathe."*

*Submitting articles to the Promises
is another way to be of service
to Alcoholics Anonymous*

Flagler County Promises 2015

Next deadline for the Promises will be December 15, 2015

Submit any questions, articles or anniversaries to:

susanrae43@gmail.com

Thanks to everyone who helped create this issue of the Promises!!!