



# PROMISES



*A PUBLICATION OF THE FLAGLER COUNTY INTERGROUP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS*

*March / April 2014*

## THE JUMPING OFF PLACE

My eyes opened and I felt my heavy body lying curled up on a cold hard surface. Through blurred eyes, I saw a pool of dark blood and vomit. It covered the commode and the floor in front of me. A putrid odor of alcohol, bile and blood hung in the air around me. I tried to move my arm to brush the tangled, soaked hair from my face, and was aware that every muscle, every joint, ached.

*Not again! I wish I were dead! Why won't you let me die?* I said to deaf ears; for I was alone, completely and utterly devastated.

Then my thoughts turned immediately to wondering if there was any scotch left in the bottle. I would need a drink before going out for more.

Putting my winter coat over the filthy clothes I had been wearing for days, I walked to the window and opened the shade just a sliver. A wave of despair flowed through me as I looked out at the thriving city street with well looking people walking to work in their business attire while talking and even laughing together.

*What is wrong with me? How did this happen? Why can't I be a part of that world?* I thought as tears streamed down my face.

Life would go on like this for another year, wishing for the end, trying to die, feeling hopeless and helpless. But this was not how my life began. I was the first born child of wonderful, loving, hardworking parents and given everything I would need to live happily in the world. By age eleven, I was already rebellious, self-seeking, and angry with the world and I had had my first drink. The times were ripe for defiance and revolution. It was the era of the Vietnam War, Hippies, Women's Liberation, and marches for equality. This was well suited for me as I had always questioned authority and the status quo, stemming from a voracious desire for knowledge and understanding.

With drink in hand, I proceeded to immerse myself in those troubled times. Like others of that period, I got pregnant, dropped out of high school, and got married. Life was good for awhile with our beautiful, precocious young son and our many friends. We dreamed of a bright future but by age twenty five, alcohol had become my constant companion and my means to live in the world.

In my late twenties, having left my dear husband and beloved son, I was drinking daily and experiencing deep depression. I had become a chameleon, able to blend in with any group, being equally at home in the dope holes and the high-class bars. But the turmoil outside of me was nothing compared to the *disease* I felt within. My incessant search for meaning was thwarted at every turn by my desire to escape how I felt.

This was to continue for ten more years. Spiraling out of control, downward into a dark abyss, I wished for the end. Suicide attempts became more frequent and even a long stay in the psychiatric hospital did not end my pain. I was at the jumping off place.

But Divine Help came in the form of an old drinking friend who I learned was sober in Alcoholics Anonymous. While in a blackout I called him, he later informed me. He began taking me to meetings and a seed of hope was planted. I began to hear a voice from within say, *Maybe I can stop drinking as these people have done.*

A glorious miracle occurred in my life three weeks later when I had my first day without a drink of alcohol. That was March 10, 1987. I continued to attend meetings and follow some simple directions from the compassionate people who wanted nothing but the best for me. They were fellow alcoholics, my new family. I would never have to be alone again. At first I felt sad and afraid to lose my best friend, alcohol, but those feelings were soon replaced with a sense of freedom that I had never before experienced.

I could fill volumes on the last twenty-seven years of my life in recovery. What began as a flicker of desire; has grown into a life filled with meaning and purpose. I have learned that my anguished past was my greatest asset. The answers I sought were deep within me. It was there that I found a profound connection to the Spirit of the Universe.

Through the process of the Steps, I traveled back to the beginning of my life and understood it for the first time. With the guidance of my sponsor, I began to take responsibility for the harm I had caused others and later to carry the message of recovery to other alcoholics. My life had purpose at last.

As I look back over these wonder-filled years, I realize that Alcoholics Anonymous has transformed me. I have joined the world of the living that I once longed for. The joy of life that eluded me for so many years, I now experience in abundance. By continuing to stay rooted in the fertile soil of recovery, I have learned what it means to be happy and usefully whole. Through academic success, the loss of a flourishing career due to ill health, loved ones dying from horrific diseases, a newfound relationship with my amazing son and his wonderful wife, depression, and elation my AA family has been by my side.

As a child I dreamt of living by the ocean, looking out from my window while writing books. My dream has come true and along with it has come a peace that surpasses anything I could have imagined. I could not love my life more and, yet, I know I can only keep it by giving it all away. There is no greater joy than seeing an alcoholic like myself take hold of the program and the promise of a new life.

I cannot end this writing without a special note to say thank you to my wonderful sponsor of twenty seven incredible years, Debbie T., to the amazing woman I sponsor, Sarah F., and to my awe-inspiring friends in AA. Thank you for loving me. I am eternally grateful.

Much love to all who read this. Remember always...never, ever give up!

Marybeth J. ~

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

[www.AAflagler.org](http://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

## JUMP START:

### MARCH:

Howie B. 29 years

### APRIL:

Amanda R. 5 years  
Jackie McG. 34 years  
Jimmy B. 9 years

## KEEPING IT GREEN:

### APRIL:

Richard T. 32 years

## JANUARY BELATED:

Helen T. 4 years

## WOMENS ACCEPTANCE:

### MARCH:

Dawn E. 1 year  
Laura A. 11 years

## 24 HOUR GROUP:

### MARCH:

Terry M. 1 year  
Miguel B. 2 years  
Jimmy S. 32 years  
Christina U. 2 years

### APRIL:

Richard 32 years  
Coach 3 years  
Pam H. 31 years  
Jackie M. 34 years

## NOMAD GROUP:

### MARCH:

Jim O. 32 years  
Zeke Z. 25 years

### APRIL:

Jim G. 21 years

## STEPPING SISTERS:

### MARCH:

Midge G. 39 years

### APRIL:

Donna H. 16 years

## MONDAY NIGHT LIVE:

### MARCH:

Jane M. 3 years

## MONDEX GROUP:

### MARCH:

Roger S. 4 years

## FEBRUARY BELATED:

Gerry W. 26 years

## D.T.'s GROUP:

### MARCH:

Roger 4 years

### APRIL:

Richard T. 32 years  
Ritchie 36 years  
Ellen H. 1 year  
Tom B. 39 years

## JANUARY BELATED:

Helen T. 4 years

## LUCKY TO BE HERE:

### APRIL:

Jerry L. 17 years  
Pam H. 31 years

## JANUARY BELATED:

Jack W. 16 years  
Kelly S. 16 years  
Peggy Y. 21 years

## LIVING SOBER:

### MARCH:

Ellen S. 4 years  
Dutch D. 11 years  
Nina D. 29 years  
Jim O'C. 32 years

### APRIL:

Denny N. 20 years  
Mike S. 27 years  
Sheila O'C. 31 years

## WOMEN TO WOMEN:

### MARCH:

Ellen S. 4 years  
Christina U. 2 years  
Midge G. 38 years

### APRIL:

Angela M. 12 years  
Donna H. 15 years  
Janet J. 27 years

## FEBRUARY BELATED:

Carolyn Q. 23 years

## TGIF:

### MARCH:

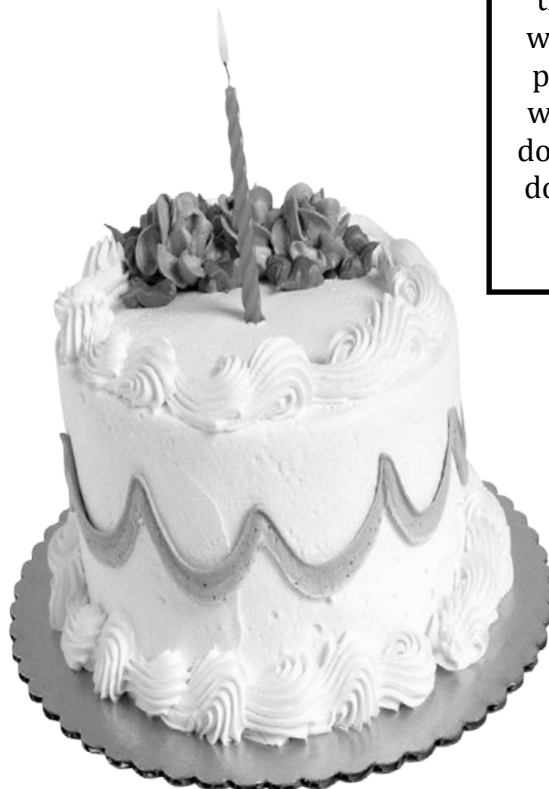
George S. 60 years  
Nell S. 6 years  
Cheryl S. 8 years  
Midge G. 39 years

### APRIL:

Grace K. 27 years  
Edi S. 4 years  
Jim H. 13 years  
Mike S. 27 years

## RECOVERY PRAYER

Thank you for keeping me straight yesterday. Please help me stay straight today. For the next twenty-four hours, I pray for knowledge of Your will for me only, and the power to carry that through. Please free my thinking of self-will, self-seeking, dishonesty, and wrong motives. Send me the right thought, word, or action. Show me what my next step should be. In times of doubt and indecision, please send Your inspiration and guidance. I ask that You might help me work through all my problems, to Your glory and honor. This prayer is a recovery prayer. It can take us through any situation. In the days ahead, we'll explore the ideas in it. If we pray this prayer, we can trust it has been answered with a yes. Today, I will trust that God will do for me what I cannot do for myself. I will do my part - working the Twelve Steps and letting God do the rest.



We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics. This is the first step in recovery. The delusion that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed.  
~ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS,  
pg. 30

## THE JOURNEY HOME


Recently, a long time member of our group, an "old-timer" in AA, lost his life to pneumonia. Having practiced the principles of AA in all his affairs right up to the end, Chuck died sober, the ultimate twelfth step. We learn in the rooms of AA that we stay sober a day at a time. Too often, we forget that we only stay alive one day at a time as well. When I heard the news of his death it made me pause to wonder if I, too, would one day die sober.

The Big Book tells me that the day will come when the only thing standing between me and a drink of alcohol will be my relationship with my Higher Power. Fortunately, the book further suggests how to keep that relationship in tact: By seeking "through prayer and meditation to improve my conscious contact with God as I understood Him." It's interesting that Bill W., a well known "wordsmith," would choose the phrase "conscious contact with God." Had anyone else written that 11<sup>th</sup> step, they might have chosen the simpler phrase "contact with God." Having had a spiritual awakening, did Bill see broader implications for his choice of words? Is, what we experience right in front of us all the time, our very consciousness, our window of opportunity to God?

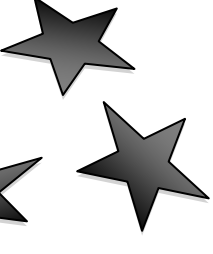
As unique individuals on our own path through life, we each experience this conscious contact with God, this window to our spirituality is our own unique way: "As we understand Him." Yet, as "spiritual beings having a bodily experience," our individualized contacts with God, though perhaps varied in form, are always a window to home base through which we maintain our spiritual lifeline.

So, if I practice the 11<sup>th</sup> step faithfully, will I die sober like Chuck? This much I know. I have already lost too many of life's magical moments to my addiction to alcohol and I sure would hate to miss life's culminating event to a black out! When my consciousness frees itself from a body no longer able to go on, I want to be fully present to what has to be life's most sobering, yet awesome moment: Our return home.

## Announcements & Information



Looking to do "Service Work"?  
The Help Line is a wonderful way to do service work by helping others in time of need. It is very rewarding, humbling and a way to feel grateful.  
Call Joan at 445-4357



ANNOUNCING A WOMEN'S MEETING  
The Fellowship We Crave  
Big Book / 12 x 12 Study Group  
6:00 - 7:15 p.m. Tuesday's  
St. Mark's By The Sea Lutheran Church  
303 Palm Coast Parkway NE

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

Flagler County Intergroup meets the first Monday of the each month. District 22, Flagler County AA, meets the last Monday of each month. Both groups meet at the Florida Hospital Flagler, Lind Educational Center, Room C on the first floor. Both meetings start at 6:30 p.m.  
All AA members are welcome to attend.

### 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 F. at 386-446-8801 or rebos7@bellsouth.net

Acronym for March and April: F E A R  
Forget Everything And Run or Face Everything And Recover

## Happy, Joyous and Free

M J P M Z B E F K V M N X Z Y  
K P R Q X X B F A E M J C M Q  
T L A W I E X P E R I E N C E  
P H Y J D H T G N E R T S Z W  
I T E S T E P S V O W M T T I  
Z I R Y H O R P G Z E N L S H  
J A M Z V E X R C E W V Z D T  
N F K O M E D I T A T I O N H  
T S A T K Z A I H X R T A J B  
N T M F L C N H O N E S T Y J  
N X R I E G V L P C F H T W U  
R A D T S K X F E S F H X R I  
X K W I L L I N G N E S S F K  
O X M T Q J D D C Z G F H S E  
S K Y T I L A U T I R I P S T

WILLINGNESS

SPIRITUALITY

STEPS

EXPERIENCE

STRENGTH

HOPE

MEETINGS

MEDITATION

PRAYER

FAITH

HONESTY

*"Let today be the day you learn the grace of letting go and the power of moving on."*

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

*Flagler County Promises 2014*

*Next deadline for the Promises will be April 15, 2014*

*Submit any questions, articles or anniversaries to:*

*susanrae115@gmail.com*

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