



# PROMISES



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

*September / October 2014*

It is said that an Alcoholic stops maturing when he or she begins to drink alcoholically. That's not when Dad first gave you a sip of his beer it's when you began to use alcohol as a mood changing – mind altering substance. It is further suggested that an alcoholic doesn't resume maturing until the onset of sobriety. Since I began alcoholic drinking at 17 and have been sober 32 years, I'm only 49. Ha Ha! I wish it were so and yet there is some truth to it because I feel that I have gotten my life back. Although my chronological age has continued to march, I am not the man who drank as I did and I am delightfully young at heart. Why?

Alcohol robbed me of at least 23 years of my life. It came within seconds and inches of killing me and most importantly it stole a million or more joys I might have known without it. That's not a sad memory. It is a powerful and life changing awareness that (I pray) will help me to remain sober for the rest of this trip. My tale of woe is not really worth repeating. It is the same drunk o log, when told honestly and thoroughly, at every speaker meeting. What is important is what happened to me. I hit bottom – Hi? Low? That doesn't matter. What matters is that I reached a point of absolute and total hopelessness and helplessness. I was completely defeated and in a moment of clarity I surrendered to God and AA. Today I know that this is the only surrender that ultimately leads to victory if I persist, if I carry on and if I do the next right thing. My desperation led me to do what AA told me. In time, God became a quiet, dependable voice that I hear a thousand times from my sponsor, from newcomers and from people like you at meetings. Today I “practice these principles in all my affairs” because they are a design for living that has given me more than I, at my greediest, most self-centered point, ever could have or would have dreamed of. It has let me dream and have more of those dreams come true than I deserve.

I've learned a lot in AA. I've learned that I desperately needed the twelve steps to fix the things inside me that alcohol used to fix – things that I couldn't stand about myself, you, the word I live in and life on its oppressive, ever changing terms. I've learned that when I settled comfortably into the certain knowledge and trust that I am in God's care, I will always be OK – no matter what happens, I will always be OK. That's done a lot for the fear that the steps let me see had dominated almost every aspect of my actively alcoholic life.

When I try to say how grateful I am for sobriety and Alcoholics Anonymous, I fail because today I live and feel and do things I was incapable of imagining. I am overwhelmed by it. My greatest wish is that once in a while I can help another alcoholic to get that too. God Bless You all.

Lee, M.

October 2014

## DEAR GOD

I have no idea where I am going I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where I will end. Nor do I really know myself... and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe this: I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. I hope I have that desire in everything I do. I hope I never persist in anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it at the time. Therefore, I will trust you always, for though I may seem to be lost – and in the shadow of death – I will not be afraid, because I know you will never leave me to face my troubles all alone. Amen

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:

### SEPTEMBER:

John L. 9 years  
Kenny F. 14 years  
Mike S. 3 years  
Tom Mc. 27 years

### OCTOBER:

John M. 1 year  
Kate S. 2 years  
Jimmy E. 4 years  
Lee M. 32 years

## MESSAGE GROUP:

### SEPTEMBER:

Katheleen B. 1 year  
Melinda R. 1 year  
Elaine R. 1 year

### OCTOBER:

Jinty C. 22 years  
Bev J. 42 years  
Keith P. 27 years

## LUCKY TO BE HERE:

### SEPTEMBER:

Sally C. 36 years

## CAME TO BELIEVE:

### SEPTEMBER:

Ron S. 16 years

## STEPS TO SERENITY:

### AUGUST BELATED:

Karen I. 26 years  
Art O.N. 38 years  
Joe C. 37 years  
Karen B. 8 years  
Steve 51 years  
Rick M. 5 years  
Richard L. 21 years

## LIVING SOBER:

### OCTOBER:

Bill W. 28 years

## NOMAD GROUP:

### SEPTEMBER:

Ron D. 23 years  
Fred G. 7 years

### OCTOBER

Al H. 20 years

## HAPPY WANDERERS:

### AUGUST BELATED:

Peter F. 25 years

## TGIF:

### SEPTEMBER:

Judy L. 24 years  
Mike M. 13 years

### OCTOBER:

Beverly J. 42 years  
Evelyn S. 28 years  
Beverly C. 27 years  
John H. 13 years  
Brad S. 1 year  
Mary H. 1 year

## WOMEN TO WOMEN:

### SEPTEMBER:

Pat M. 5 years  
Jayme F. 7 years  
Nicole S. 1 year

## MONDEX GROUP:

### JULY BELATED:

Melissa M. 1 year  
Lulu 27 years

### OCTOBER:

Al H. 20 years

## WOMEN'S ACCEPTANCE:

### OCTOBER:

Beverly J. 42 years  
Jodie V. 23 years

## MONDAY NIGHT LIVE:

### SEPTEMBER:

David G. 5 years  
Rich C. 4 years

## LIFE'S A BEACH:

### SEPTEMBER:

Joe C. 24 years  
Robert O. 11 years  
Kathy C. 3 years  
Michele T. 1 year

### OCTOBER:

Jim T. 5 years  
Darin C. 4 years  
JoJo 3 years  
Andrea M. 2 years



I came to you holding my stomach, wanting to vomit and shaking. This is how I felt when I picked up my first 24 hour chip. That was November 13, 2009.

That evening I promised the spirit of my mother that I would never drink again. Her spirit helped me get through the first 48 hours without a drink.

I couldn't sleep. I was one that picked up the first drink at 3 in the afternoon and I couldn't stop until 2 or 3 in the morning. With a drunken voice and weaving to the bedroom to fall asleep. Some nights I would blackout from insanity and fall asleep on the kitchen floor leaving the stove on with a pan burning on the burner.

One time I fell on the driveway completely insane and drunk. My head hitting the concrete like a watermelon.

Another time when my kids were 10 I drove with them strapped in the back seat of my Camaro. As the alcohol began moving through my bloodstream I was driving fast, playing loud music. An abrupt curve and off the road the Camaro hits the embankment and on to a tree. I can imagine today the terror that my kids felt holding on to the seat belt and crying in horror.

I have to tell my fellow alcoholics in recovery about the miracle that has happened since you came into my life and embraced me.

You have changed my life for the better. I no longer have the tremors. I no longer need alcohol to function or numb my emotions. The quality of my life has also changed for the better. I go to meetings to LEARN. That for me has been the force of seeing you at meetings and telling me how you have been living alcohol free for 20, 30, 40 years. That still blows my mind.

God put in my life and in my arms my first grand-baby. This miracle of living happened when I was 8 months sober. Wow.

Let me tell you my friends in recovery that the baby has not seen me drunk and for as long as I continue to LEARN from you at meetings she will not have to see me drunk. Today I think, "that would be so nasty and unacceptable for her to see me drunk. Yuck".

I believe in the power of prayer because without the prayers from my sponsor and the fellowship I would not have been able to grab the teachings of Alcoholics Anonymous and live with it.

I miss my friends that left us. They might be already having meetings wherever they are and praying for the recovery of so many of us. Love, Peace, Serenity and Sobriety.

Rosie G.

Every Styrofoam cup you have ever used is still in existence. Outside issue? Perhaps that was the immediate response that crossed some readers' minds. Tradition Ten has been on mind, battling with the section of Step Twelve which asks us to practice our principles, newfound growth and sense of responsibility in the world around us, inside and outside of the rooms of AA. This inner conflict, supported by my character defect of never wanting to make anybody feel bad, has prevented me from writing this article for months.

According to a report from the General Service Office in New York, the estimated number of AA groups and members as of January 1, 2014 is 59,565 and 1,295,037 respectively. Approximately how many Styrofoam cups are we using? Suppose, hypothetically, that each member attends three meetings a week. Not everyone drinks coffee and some members do bring their own, so let us reason out of this total only one half use Styrofoam cups. This brings the count to 1,942,555 Styrofoam cups per week and a nauseating 101,012,886 cups per year.



As I searched online, hunting for other members who are talking about this, I stumbled on an article titled, *The Carbon Footprint of Alcoholics Anonymous*, by JR Harris. The format of this article allows readers to post comments in response to the article. A member responded to the piece with an estimate of cups used by a group local to him. He proposed that this medium sized AA meeting with 20 people meeting three times a week disposes of 3,120 Styrofoam cups a year. This number does not sound too drastic until you multiply it by the 59,565 groups registered with the GSO. By this member's estimation, the totality of our fellowship nationwide deposits approximately 185,842,800 Styrofoam cups into landfills each year.

In Mid-Central California, Area Nine brought their concerns on this issue to the table at a conference in 2010, suggesting to ban the use of Styrofoam cups at area meetings. According to many websites including an article published by the trusted source, Scholastic News, it takes one Styrofoam cup more than one million years to decompose. Styrofoam cups hit the shelves in 1957, so for all of us who have gotten sober in the 1960's to present day, every Styrofoam cup we have ever used is still out there. I do not believe that this is a part of the legacy we were meant to leave behind.

When I began my recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous I felt overjoyed and blessed to become a part of such an incredible group of positive, nurturing people. As I continued to grow I began to feel connected to the world around me; "a part of" the bigger picture. Today, along with being an active member of our fellowship I strive, as described in the Twelve and Twelve, "to be a friend among friends, to be a worker among workers, to be a useful member of society." I try very hard to do the next right thing in all of my affairs and grow into the person that my Higher Power intended. Doing what I can to take care of our environment and preserve our resources is an action that brings me closer to my Higher Power. Whatever or whoever the Creator is created this awesome home, school house and playground we call Earth. I feel that I have a responsibility to do my part in taking care of our planet. It's part of the job. Plain and simple.

The Styrofoam Cup is such a ritual at our meetings, such an ingrained habit, that it may seem extreme to some members to even have this discussion. That first cup of coffee is a part of so many of our stories. However, we are at a time when many individuals, businesses, and organizations are taking a look at the choices they make in regards to preserving and protecting the planet. I often hear at meetings that change is not our forte, but I also hear people say, "Change we must." There are many solutions to this dilemma. Each member and group must decide what works for them. Literally millions of us know that attraction rather than promotion works. With numbers like this the impact of stopping the use of Styrofoam or extreme Styrofoam reduction would be visible, tangible, and wonderful. It has to begin somewhere... Thank you for letting me share. -Amy P.

# Announcements & Information

## GRATITUDE DINNER

Saturday, November 1, 2014

St. Thomas Episcopal Church

Dinner Catered - \$10 per

person

## NEW MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

WILLINGNESS GROUP OF AA  
WEDNESDAY'S 8 AM - 9 AM  
AT SILVER DOLLAR CLUB

### 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, Sandpiper, 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 September and October: A A**  
Action or Acceptance ←

**The Song of Sobriety**

When I first arrived at AA, confused and bewildered by the insanity of my drinking, it was hard to imagine a way of life which was free of alcohol's grip. But, I was eager to learn about this "new freedom and new happiness" which the AA way of life was promising. In retrospect, I see how the steps, the key suggestions of recovery, did their magic; uniting us with our Higher Power, helping us uncover our character defects, guiding us to admit our past indiscretions and suggesting a new code of conduct for our lives. Service to others provided a template for what that new conduct should look like, while sponsorship guided us along this new road to recovery. Yet, there seemed to be another important principle at work vital to creating a well woven fabric of recovery, something I heard in the stories shared at meetings by those whose recovery I most admired. Attitude!

Attitude, how simple it sounded. But, could attitude be the key to utilizing the principles of the program in a balanced fashion, recognizing when to match a given situation with the appropriate response? I remembered something I recently read about music. A famous composer once commented "what is best in music is not to be found in the notes." Other musicians have referred to this as "the music between the notes." As an analogy to recovery, a musician must master the basic skills required of making music (**steps**) and apply those skills to master the wider world of music (**guided sponsorship**). But, it is the heart felt blending of those musical skills, such as the softness of touch on the keyboard or knowing when one note is best emphasized over another (**attitude**) which produces the "essence of the music" (**new freedom and new happiness**) and brings life to an otherwise stiff and mediocre performance (**half-hearted recovery**). In the music world this mystical quality brought to the musician's performance is known by the Greek word "*melos*." Could "attitude" be the "*melos*" of recovery? If so, it further begs the question, "what constitutes this essential attitude?"

Yes, an "attitude of gratitude" is frequently suggested as the umbrella under which we might conduct our lives. Yet, the assortment of personal challenges we face in our sobriety (life on life's terms) often demand something more. It is here, between the "notes" of gratitude, so to speak, that one can hear the music of other program fundamentals: Acceptance, honesty, optimism, willingness, giving of oneself to others and the practice of the program's principles in all our affairs. So today, when my recovery is becoming stiff and mediocre, I know my challenge is to balance these instruments of recovery to create my personal "song of sobriety" and, in turn, rekindle that "new freedom and new happiness."

~Bill B.

**STEP 11**

The first time I ever thoroughly looked at Step 11 and separated the words into actions that are suggestions I was moved more by it more than any other step. I remember actually taking paper and pencil and writing down words that stood out for me as the most significant and those words were His will and power to carry that out. This step also tells you how to achieve that "by prayer and meditation."

I would say that most of us have someone in our life that we call our "best friend." The person that we can share anything at all with and know that we can trust utterly, a person who knows the best and worst of us and loves us in spite of our short comings and faults.

Many in the fellowship have different beliefs when we speak of a higher power but what remains the same is that most share that there is a higher power in their lives.

My higher power is the Triune God. When I was a child I learned a hymn that has remained my favorite to this day. "What a friend we have in Jesus." I have kept that thought and applied it to the importance of prayer and meditation. When I apply the 11<sup>th</sup> Step to my everyday life by improving my conscious contact through prayer and meditation I am able to unburden myself as we all do when we seek out that friend.

J.M. pg. 39, Came To Believe pg. 77, Big Book pg. 85 Into Action excerpts chapter

*"The past has no power and no hold over me anymore."*

*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 October 15, 2014*

*Submit any questions, articles or anniversaries to:*

*susanrae43@gmail.com*

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