



# Nature Coast Journal



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## “How The Universe Works”

By John L, Pinellas Park, Florida

*Published in the November 2006 Grapevine - Abbreviated Version*

I grew up in the middle 50's in a small town in southern New Hampshire. Everyone pretty much knew everyone else's business and if things were not right, although concerned, they would look the other way. My father was very involved in the drinking community. When someone had a project and needed help, Henry was there. Of course there was always a case of beer involved. Don't know if anything would have been accomplished without the beer. As I recall that concept was never tested.

One Friday evening an event happened that would change my family life forever. On his way home from work, my father was killed in an auto accident. His blood alcohol level was point three five. The police and a priest came to our house and told my mother what had happened. The priest told me that I was now the head of the family. I was 12 when this happened. From that moment I shut down all my feelings for the next thirty years. No God, no feelings, alone, but strong.

My mother started drinking heavily. Things got real bad very quickly. Two months after my fathers death I tried my first drink. It tasted terrible but I really liked the feeling. The shy, introvert that I was, became the outgoing, taller, better-looking guy that I

always wanted too be. I would have done this much earlier had I only known. That was the beginning.

Although I wasn't able to get liquor as often as I would have liked, I did managed a six-pack once in a while on weekends. I joined the Air Force after High School to avoid the Army as Vietnam was going strong at the time. The Air Force didn't care what I did after work so I spent a lot of time in the enlisted men's club. I drank daily for another twenty-two years. Like most of us there were lots of little encounters, which I now know as signposts or glaring billboards depending on the weekend. One DWI and a few arrests lead to what I hope is my final drunk. This is the one I never want to forget.

I started drinking at the VFW, across the street from my apartment early one Saturday morning. Sometime late in the evening after drinking all day I was involved in a pushing match with a Spanish fellow over his refusal to speak English. My gun came out and I threatened him and his family. Lucky for me the bouncer was close by and jumped in taking away the gun. But for the Grace of God it didn't go off. I was taken outside, beaten up and left unconscious in the parking lot.

The next morning the police arrived and off to jail I went. I was charged with assault with a deadly weapon and I was terrified. After a short stay in jail I set bail and proceeded to find a lawyer. The lawyer suggested, because I

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A Weekend  
to Remember  
June 1979

Vol. 36 No. 1

JUST THREE months sober in AA, after reviewing "The Family Afterward" in the Big Book, I decided to mix some pleasure with working Step Nine. My plan was a three-day fishing trip to northern Minnesota with my two sons, ages eleven and nine meaning selfish enjoyment on my part and needed togetherness with Tony and Jim. With sobriety, our relationship had improved immensely; but I felt a deep need to get reacquainted with the boys after the many times I had neglected them during my drinking days. Certainly, conscious guilt was instrumental in my decision. I worked Step

Heavenly Father, Help us remember that the jerk who cut us off in traffic last night is a single mother who worked nine hours that day and is rushing home to cook dinner, help with homework, do the laundry and spend a few precious moments with her children.

Help us to remember that the pierced, tattooed, disinterested young man who can't make change correctly is a worried 19-year-old college student, balancing his apprehension over final exams with his fear of not getting his student loans for next semester.

Remind us, Lord, that the scary looking bum, begging for money in the same spot every day (who really ought to get a job!) is a slave to addictions that we can only imagine in our worst nightmares.

Help us to remember that the old couple walking annoyingly slow through the store aisles and blocking our shopping progress are savoring this moment, knowing that based on the biopsy report she got back last week, this will be the last Christmas that they go shopping together.

Heavenly Father, remind us each day that, of all the gifts you give us, the greatest gift is love. It is not enough to share that love with those we hold dear. Open our hearts not to just those that are close to us, but to all humanity.

Let us be slow to judge and quick to forgive, show patience, empathy and love.

Working for God on earth doesn't pay much, but His retirement plan is out of this world.

## "When I say NO to you, I'm saying YES to me."

Before recovery, I wasn't very good at setting personal boundaries and when people asked me to do things, I almost always said yes - despite the emotional, physical or financial costs to me. For years I blamed and resented people for taking advantage of me, and it took me a long time in recovery to believe that saying no was not only my right, but my responsibility to myself as well.

It's still hard for me to say no to people, however. Even though I'm much better at it and do it much more frequently, I still feel like I'm letting someone down and often feel guilty for quite a while. When I heard today's quote, I finally understood why.

Saying no to you means that I'm saying yes to myself, and that concept is still foreign to me. Having been raised to disregard my needs and wants, the idea of honoring and respecting them is something that still takes contrary action for me to reinforce. The good news today is that the more I do it the better I feel, and I know that each time I do my self-esteem gets a little stronger.

*Today it's a little easier to say no to you because it feels better when I say yes to myself.*

*Michael Z*

## Area Events

### Area Assemblies 2009

**July 17-19**

**October 9-11**

Paramount Resort and  
Conference Center  
Gainesville, FL

Hotel: **352-377-4000**

30 day cut-off at the hotel. Make  
reservations early.

Info: **877-992-9229**

### Founders' Day Florida Style

[www.foundersdayflorida.org](http://www.foundersdayflorida.org)

**June 5th—7th**

Tallahassee, FL

[www.foundersdayflorida.org](http://www.foundersdayflorida.org)

*Details on our web site*

**June 20, 2009**

Singleness of Purpose  
Workshop

Perented by District 7, Ta-  
vares, FL

*Details on our web site*

### July 29th—Aug 2nd 53rd Florida State Convention

See web site for flyer

**Sept 11-13, 2009**

**10th Annual Serenity  
Weekend Women's Fall  
Conference 2009**

Coca Beach, FL

*See web site for flyer*

from Page 1, "How The Universe Works"

was guilty, I should consider not drinking anymore and maybe attending AA. "It might help when we go to court if I can tell the judge that you have been sober" she said. I knew she was right and I was really afraid.

I ended up at my first meeting, drinking of course. It did help with the fear. I really didn't listen much but did hear someone say, "maybe you should go home, get down on your knees and ask God for help." I did exactly that. I prayed right from the bottom of my soul "please God, help me, I can't stop drinking." That was more than twenty years ago. I was able to plea bargain the charges and they were removed from my record after a year of being sober.

I still attend AA on a regular basis, sponsor several guys, have a home group and been involved in the business end of several clubs. Has life been smooth since I got sober? Heck no. Like most of us I have made many bad decisions while trudging the road.

I have spent the past twenty years changing the way I think about myself. I now have the tools for success if only I choose to use them. The most powerful lesson that I have learned is that "it all happens inside my own head." The perception of any situation is in my mind and I have a choice which way I want that mind to react. I try my best to look for positive solutions, taking my problems to my sponsor or let my friends know what is going on inside me. God works through people and when "the student is ready, the teacher will appear." Sometime the teacher is an old timer and some times the new comer has the wisdom I need. The right answer will always come.

A day at a time with Gods guidance I plan never to drink again. I must always remember that "the monkey may be off my back but the circus hasn't left town" and it never will for this alcoholic.

## THE RAINBOW GROUP ARCHIVES

On April 6, 2009 the Rainbow Group of Alcoholics Anonymous celebrated its 20th anniversary by entertaining approximately sixty guests at a potluck dinner. The dinner was held in the pavilion at Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church in Dunnellon and was followed by a regular AA meeting that allowed attendees to share their gratitude for the Rainbow Group.

The first meeting of the Rainbow Group was held on April 3, 1989 at the Peace Lutheran Church on US 41, four miles north of Dunnellon at the corner of Routes 40 and 41. It was established as a closed discussion meeting on Mondays at 8:00 pm.

Some of the early members included: Smokey B., Ray C., Dawn C., Don C., Dick E., Irene F., Arnold H., Bob K. and Willie T. An Al-Anon Family Group was established about the same time and is still active at the same location.

The Rainbow Group continued to grow under the work and guidance of our Higher Power and these early members until February 1993 when a larger facility was needed. We were graciously invited to meet at Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church and were assigned Classroom 2 in the school. The Catholic Church is located at 7525 Highway 41, Dunnellon, a short distance south of the Lutheran Church. At that time it was decided to expand the Rainbow Group meeting schedule to include a Friday 8:00 pm. Open meeting.

These meetings have continued to grow and flourish until it was deemed desirable to establish Rainbow Group written guidelines to create a path for the future welfare of the group. These guidelines have served us well and it is suggested other groups may want to establish similar guidelines for their group.

We are looking forward to having a meeting every day of the week to better serve those who are still suffering.

April 26, 2009

**ANNIVERSARIES:**

Deadline for submissions is the Thursday following Intergroup meeting

**Floral City Group**

Joe L .....	3
Frank .....	11
Chuck .....	11
Van .....	27

**Holder Way of Life**

**MAY**

Joe R .....	3
Martha G.....	7
Janifer C.....	7
Ken P .....	9
Susan N .....	21
Paul T .....	31
Eddie H.....	38

**JUNE**

Brice Mc.....	24
Butch C.....	27

**Monday Nite Men's Group**

**Share At Noon**

Kathleen .....	24
Don P .....	19
Gail N .....	9

**Women's Friendship Group**

Eleanor W.....	41
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**Women To Women**

**Obituaries for May 2009**

The following members are now participating in the Big Meeting in the Sky:

**Hopefully None**

They will be missed. Our condolences to their families.

**Intergroup Hotline Report**

Kurt's May Hotline Report:

AA Outside District.....	
AA Within District .....	
Alanon .....	
Detox Sponsors.....	
NA .....	
Wet Drunk .....	
Needing Rides .....	

**INTERGROUP OFFICE/BOOKSTORE**

111 W. MAIN ST.

Rm 305

INVERNESS, FL 34450

352-344-0290

OPEN: MON, WED, FRI 10AM-4PM SAT CLOSED

Store volunteers for April: Nanci R.  
Women to Women—Rich G. Keep in Step—Mel L. High Noon

It was voted by the Intergroup representatives to lower the prices at the store on non-conference inventory. Things like medallions, jeweler, bumper stickers, gifts, books (Twenty Four Hour, Little Red Book etc) will be reduced by 25% to 40%. Stop in and see what is available.

**Letters to the Editor:**

*Opinions are that of the writer and not of Alcoholics Anonymous, the Editor, Nature Coast Journal or NC Intergroup.*

I received a letter signed anonymous this past week. It came from a member in the northern tip of our county. The letter is to long to publish but I will let you know the jest of his concerns.

*The member has concerns over the amount of reading in the beginning of the meetings. Some groups read the preamble, How it Works, Twelve Traditions, Promises and Daily Reflections. This take up to 15 minutes of the hour. His concern is that we should read less and discuss our problems as they relate to alcohol. Maybe just read the Preamble and one other is his suggestion.*

We know that each group has a perfect right to conduct it's meetings as the group conscience votes. This letter is just one members concern. By the way, this member has been sober for 35 years.

**BUSINESS MEETING**

LAST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH 4:30PM AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER IN HOLDER.

**DISTRICT 28**

MONTHLY MEETING TO FOLLOW INTERGROUP

**INTERGROUP**

**OFFICERS**

CHAIR—AL L

352-613-0366

VICE CHAIR—BEVERLY H.

(727) 560-3247

SECT—JULIE P

TREAS—JOHN L

**INTERGROUP TRUSTEES**

ROCK P-RICK T

TWO OPEN

**HOTLINE**

KURT

(352) 621-0599

**EVENTS COORDINATOR**

OPEN

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REPORTER—WILLIE

601-5362

**DISTRICT 28**

**OFFICERS**

DCM—SUE ANN A

ALT DCM—HANS N

SECT—PAT H

TREAS—PAULA D

**JOURNALS FOR GROUPS**

CAN BE PICKED UP AT:

**BOOKSTORE**

**EAST COUNTY**

FRIDAY BEGINNER'S

MEETING 6:30 PM

**WEST COUNTY**

SERENITY CLUB

JOURNAL IS ALSO

POSTED ON WEBSITE

[www.ncintergroup.com](http://www.ncintergroup.com)

Eleven, asking for the power to  
carry out what I felt was His will  
for me with my boys.

A friend had generously offered  
me the use of his cabin on a  
quiet and beautiful lake, just a  
three-hour drive away. As the boys  
had baseball games the evening  
we were to leave, it was 10:00 PM  
before we got started. They were  
as excited as I was. The anticipation  
of some fighting-walleye action  
dominated our thoughts and conversation.

It began to rain halfway,  
but that couldn't dampen our spirits.  
Arriving at midnight in what had  
become a steady downpour, we  
hurriedly unloaded the car. Looking  
over all of the food we had brought,  
I decided to get the perishables into  
the refrigerator immediately. That  
brought my first shock of the trip:  
The refrigerator contained a twelvepack  
of my old, familiar, favorite  
beer. The thought of previous fishing  
trips to the cabin flashed  
through my mind; I would have  
downed a few of those long before  
this time. A shiver went up my  
spine as I pushed the beer to one  
side to make room for the milk.  
A prayer went through my mind  
quickly: "Strengthen my sobriety  
just for today." The calm that I had  
learned in AA returned, and as the  
boys settled into bed, I picked up  
my Big Book. My sponsor's admonition  
had been "Read a bit of the Big  
Book each day," along with "Keep it  
simple," "Don't drink," and "Come to  
meetings."

Feeling more relaxed, I got  
ready for bed. When I put my wallet  
into a cabinet, I got another return-to-  
the-past shock: The cabinet was  
well stocked with booze of all types,  
including, of course, my favorite  
brandy of old. The familiar thinking  
popped up--just a shot and a beer,  
then into bed. Who would know?  
More words of Bill, my sponsor,  
came to mind: "Remember, Jack,  
you're just one drink away from another  
drunk. The decision is yours."

Supported by thoughts of my  
Higher Power, of Bill, and of my  
other newfound AA friends and remembering  
our slogan "one day at  
a time," I decided to postpone  
thoughts of that drink until tomorrow.

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Kissing my sleeping sons  
goodnight made me more determined  
not to drink that night.

The next morning began three  
of the most wonderful days of my  
life, fishing, hiking, and sight-seeing  
with my sons. It was the beginning  
of a new and close relationship between  
the boys and me.

Now, two years later, I can only  
humbly thank the beautiful Twelve  
Step program of AA for the courage  
to change and for the many other  
gifts that go along with a sober life  
in Alcoholics Anonymous. I am  
deeply grateful.

J. H.

Coon Rapids, Minnesota

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