



Nature Coast Journal



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Finding freedom in surrender

A story of experience, strength, and hope

Reprinted from The Voice, Marion County, FL District 17

"Admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable."

"Who cares to admit complete defeat?" Bill W hit the nail squarely on the head when he wrote the opening words of *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. He answered his own question with equal force and precision, "Practically no one, of course. Every natural instinct cries out against the idea of personal powerlessness."

I, like so many others say they did, fought tooth and nail for years to prove I wasn't defeated, refusing to surrender long after the ultimate outcome was

a foregone conclusion, incurring and inflicting injury upon injury, denying desperately to convince myself, "I am not one of those alcoholics."

Perversely, I acknowledged for years that I drank too much and would even allow that I might border on being an alcoholic. Always defiant and oddly proud, I qualified that admission with the caveat that, even at my worst, I was a "high functioning" alcoholic, and I could prove it.

In fact, I did just that many times. Recalling what I had learned in eighth-grade science, I set out to prove I wasn't a "true" alcoholic using the "scientific method," which, according to whoever writes Wikipedia, is "a systematic observation, measurement, and experiment, and the formulation, testing, and modification of hypotheses."

Aha! Science to the rescue! I stated my hypothesis in the designated style: "If I can go 90 days without drinking, I am not an alcoholic." Then, after systematic observation and measurement, just as I hypothesized, I went 90 days without drinking and proved beyond doubt that I was not alcoholic.

Of course, the 90 days time frame was totally ar-

bitrary and baseless, and I had conveniently forgotten the part from eighth-grade science that says, "Scientific inquiry is generally intended to be as objective as possible and to reduce biased interpretation." But who reads the fine print?

For nearly 25 years, I periodically repeated that experiment, and always to the same satisfying result. 90 days. No drinking. Not an alcoholic.

As it turns out, there's something to this scientific method after all. In 2006, after spending a couple of years on a liter or more of vodka a day bender, I decided it was time to run the experiment again. All indicators said I should: no bath in eight days, hardly any food, passed out on the couch except to get another drink. My family distraught, bills unpaid, clients irate, and a relationship in free fall.

Time for the scientific solution, again. I abruptly stopped drinking, and four days later my body, then in full-blown withdrawal, rebelled into total system failure. Another 10 days later, by the grace of my higher power and the skill of his trusted servants in the medical professions, I awoke in intensive care barely alive.

In that hospital bed, unable to walk, eat, or even urinate on my own and barely able to breathe unaided, I discovered powerlessness.

Finally, after years of scientific experimentation, I found truth. I had proven my hypothesis wrong, which is a perfectly legitimate outcome of the scientific method. I had demonstrated conclusively: I was powerless over alcohol. My life had become unmanageable in every conceivable way. I was a true alcoholic.

I don't recommend this method of discovery to others, but beginning with that miracle of survival, an unbroken string of miracles brought me to Alcoholics Anonymous and has kept me coming back for more one day at a time ever since. Some may not see the mundane events as miraculous.

In that hospital bed, unable to walk, eat, or even urinate on my own and barely able to breathe unaided, I discovered powerlessness.

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Letters to the Editor:

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

To the Editor,

I was overwhelmed with sadness when I read in the Journal that our Intergroup Store will close on April 1st. I just returned from the Delegates Get-Together in Atlanta, where I heard our S.E. Regional Trustee give the latest General Service Board Report. AA World Services & Grapevine are suffering from decreasing contributions, declining subscriptions and escalating costs. At our January Assembly, in St. Augustine, Area 14's Financial Report for 2011 showed group contributions were down more than \$12,000.

On the flight back to Florida I quietly contemplate how I could possibly make a difference in AA's future. I decided I would accept the challenge, not as an Area Office, but as a member of the fellowship, to do more. As a sober member of this fellowship I decided to not only remember my last drunk, but to recall how much I spent on that drunk. When I was drinking I always found the money I needed. GSO asks its members to send \$1 for every year of sobriety; I decided to send \$2. They are suggesting \$2 in the basket; I decided to give \$3. They also suggested instead of buying sponsees' & your sponsor a card for their anniversaries to make a contribution to a service entity. I like that idea and I am going to start practicing that suggestion. I never want the next generation not to have AA.

"I am responsible . . . When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible."

This says it all. **I** am responsible!

Marilyn B.

To the Journal Editor:

I would like to suggest to all groups who pass around Where & When's for phone numbers that individuals add the town they live in next to their phone number. That may make it easier for a new person to call someone that is in their area for a ride or just to talk. I know it would have helped me a lot in the beginning. I put my name, phone and where I live on all that I sign and think it might be a good idea if everyone would.

Jim L (Cookie Man)

No Longer Lonely And Alone

During my early drinking years there were periods where I felt all alone. When entering a room full of people I would look around and it seems to me the room was empty. During that dark time I felt totally alone. While sitting at the bar it felt like I was the only one there. At that time I had no friends, no one who cared what I did or how I felt. That was a very depressing time in my life. Crazy thoughts filled my mind. Inside my head I would say "O' God what is wrong with me? Why am I like this? Am I that different from other people?" Then I reached a point where I had no control over my thoughts and actions. In desperation I looked to the heavens and said "God please help me".

Soon after I was introduced to AA where I entered a room full of people and it felt like they were there for me, most were smiling and very friendly. I immediately felt at home with these people and I knew they cared about me. It was then that I knew my Higher Power had answered that simple prayer.

Now it's my turn to pay God back for this gift by living the AA program and carrying the message, the true message, of our program which is to "help others". I am no longer alone and lonely. Thank you Alcoholics Anonymous.

Ernie P, Attitude Adjustment Group



"A few of us are getting together after work to binge-drink. You're welcome to join us if you're not in recovery."

From page 1 I see them as nothing less.

First, there was a strange little man who came to my bedside in the hospital and told me I should never drink again and handed me a sheet of paper with some phone numbers on it. I first called the number of a highly respected recovery program, and the counselor who answered said the program didn't have any openings, but suggested that I try Alcoholics Anonymous. She then matter-of-factly acknowledged that she was an alcoholic in recovery and that AA is where she got and stays sober. Zap — the miracle of carrying the message.

She suggested I call Intergroup 17 in Ocala, Florida. I wanted nothing to do with AA, but desperation had set in. I hesitatingly punched in the digits. The warm voice of the person on the phone at Intergroup reassured me that there was a solution and directed me to my first AA meeting. Zap, I was Twelfth-Stepped!

At that first meeting, I encountered a roomful of incredibly diverse — in every sense of the word — people. They didn't seem to care at all that I obviously didn't want to be there and most likely didn't want to get to know them either. They just welcomed me

in. As I gazed around the room, I noticed a carved wooden sign nailed above the door, "You are not alone now." Zap, the power of the fellowship.

Those people — now my home group — shared their experiences, and as I listened, I heard them tell to my surprise parts of my story. I heard in their stories my own pain, my despair, my desperation. They didn't stop there. They also shared their strength and hope, and miraculously in that one hour, I came to the realization of who I was. I knew I was one of them. I knew I was home. Zap. Zap. Zap.

What irony. I who fought so hard against defeat found in surrender a power greater than myself who can restore me to sanity. I have found a happiness, joy, and freedom I never knew could exist just by admitting that I am powerless over alcohol and that my life has become unmanageable.

I gratefully and humbly acknowledge the existence of that higher power who lives just beyond Step One every time I say the most liberating words I have or ever will say, "My name is Max. I am an alcoholic."

Max R

Area Events

Details on our web site

Area Assemblies 2012
March 30-April 1, 2012

July 13—15

Renaissance Resort at
the World Golf Village

St. Augustine, FL

Hotel: **904-940-8000**

DETAILS ON WEBSITE

The Woodstock of AA

Cocoa Beach

22nd Spring Conference

May 4-6, 2012

Founder's Day Akron

June 8,9 & 10, 2012

August 1-5, 2012

56th Florida State Convention
Innisbrook Golf, Palm Harbor

www.56.flstateconvention.com

Club Sobriety Update

Corporation has been approved and we are looking for an affordable property. Information, Ideas, Discussion, or Donations for a Sober Club House in Citrus County—Contact J.P.Rik—Riklib@tampabay.rr.com or

Hope

He had lain awake all night.

Down in the pit of his depression,
new hope had suddenly been born.

The thought flashed through his mind,

"If they can do it, I can do it!"

Over and over he said this to himself.

Finally, out of his hope, there burst conviction.

Now he was sure. Then came a great joy.

At length peace stole over him, and he slept.

c. 2001 AAWS, Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 189

Thought to Consider . . .

Hope sees the invisible, feels the intangible,
and achieves the impossible.

BYLAW CHANGE MEETING MARCH 25th

to discuss changing the wording for clarification in the length of service for Officers.

Article Four

Officers shall be elected for a term of two years, none serving in that capacity for longer than four consecutive years.

Amendment to Article Four

Officers shall be elected for a term of two years, none serving in that capacity for longer than four consecutive years, with capacity defined as a specific position such as secretary.

There was some question's that this statement could have been taken more than one way. This change will state what the intention of the amendment really was.

ANNIVERSARIES:

Deadline for submissions is the Thursday following Intergroup meeting

Floral City Group
 Reese 11
 Butch P 10
 Joe F 10
 Wayne 10

Floral City Men's Group
 Tom S 17
 Reece S 11

High Noon Group
 Jack H 28
 Steve C 2
 Holly C 2

Holder Way of Life Group
 Larry M 35
 George N 24
 Blu A 29
 Sonny D 5
 Terry D 2

Last Chance Group
 BNeil S (Feb) 39
 Jill P(Feb) 20
 Billy W (Feb) 11

Rainbow Group
 Steve B 27
 Barbra E 4

Resentment Group
 Big Ed M 23
 Tom M 3
 Terry D 2
 Gordon W 1
 Linda P 1

Share At Noon
 Evonne 29
 Lisa 6

Sober Sandknats
 Buddy H 36
 Sherrie B 3

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: Paul B (High Noon), Rose C (Attitude Adjustment), Just Plain Rick (Resentment), John W (BB 164), Janet B (Attitude Adjustment), Jim L (Attitude Adjustment), Butch L (Its In The Book), Anonymous

Intergroup Hotline Report

Hotline Report: 63

AA 44, NA 1, Detox 4, Alanon 4, Misc 4, Missed 6.
 If you would like to be a volunteer for the 12 Step List just call the Hotline number and give them your information. Groups can download a signup sheet from the web site and pass it around at meetings.

The following groups were represented at the Intergroup meeting.

Attitude Adjustment, Big Book 164, Crystal River, Dunnellon, Dunnellon New Beginnings, High Noon, Holder Way Of Life, Inverness Wednesday Night, Rainbow, Resentment, Wahoo, Women's Friendship, Won Rebos

They Will Be Missed



Monday Fatima meeting say's goodbye

Beverly H passed on February 26th after a long illness. Her beauty, courage, sacrifice, honesty, strength, humility, and service are just a few of the things which will be missed. AA in Citrus County will not be the same without her. Thank you Beverly for modeling for us just how to Walk The Talk.

MEMORIAL

Sunday March 11th at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church with doors opening at 2:00. Light refreshments and coffee will be served. Contact John R at jrumage@tampabay.rr.com

Bill F went home to the Lord on February 10th. Bill will be missed by those who attended meetings in the Crystal River area.

New address for donations to Intergroup

Nature Coast Intergroup
 3290 East Millwood Lane
 Hernando, FL 34442

Please let your group treasurer know when mailing in donations.

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
586-0800
- VICE CHAIR—BEVERLY H
344-5939
- SECT—DENIS S
- TREAS—JOHN L

INTERGROUP TRUSTEES

- DARRAL M—PAUL B
- STEVE N—MARTHA G

HOTLINE

KURT W
621-0599

WEBSITE

www.ncintergroup.com

JOURNAL

- EDITOR—JOHN L
news@ncintergroup.com
- ASSIST—STEVE N
344-5939

DISTRICT 28

OFFICERS

- DCM—PAT H
- ALT DCM—PAULA D
- SECT—STEVE N
- TREAS—CHAR S

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

GRATITUDE

I show my Gratitude by GIVING and expecting nothing in return. When I put conditions on my giving that isn't Gratitude, it's deal making.

Contributions			
2012	YTD	Feb	
ABC Group	\$0.00		
Attitude Adjustment Gp	\$0.00		
Big Book 164	\$75.00		
Bright Spot	\$10.00		
Crystal River BB	\$0.00		
Crystal River Group	\$0.00		
Primary Purpose CR	\$17.00		
Dunnellon Group	\$0.00		
New Beginnings-Dunn	\$0.00		
Floral City Group	\$0.00		
Floral City Men's Group	\$0.00		
High Noon Group	\$100.00		
Holder Way of Life Gp	\$0.00		
Inverness Friday Night	\$80.00	\$80.00	
Inverness Monday Nigh	\$0.00		
Inverness Wed Night	\$40.00	\$40.00	
It's In The Book	\$20.00	\$20.00	
Keep In Step	\$0.00		
Last Chance Gp	\$0.00		
Lecanto Group	\$0.00		
Monday Night Men's	\$0.00		
Never To Early Group	\$0.00		
Night Cap Group	\$0.00		
Quail Run Closed Step	\$0.00		
No Name Group	\$0.00		
Red Eye Group	\$0.00		
Rainbow Group	\$0.00		
Resentment Group	\$0.00		
Share At Noon	\$100.00		
Sober Sand Nats	\$0.00		
Wahoo Group	\$0.00		
What The Book Says	\$0.00		
Women's Friendship Gp	\$30.00		
Women to Women	\$20.00		
Women's N-Beginnings	\$0.00		
Won Rebos	\$96.75		
Yana	\$0.00		
Personal	\$50.00	\$50.00	
Monthly Totals 2012	\$588.75	\$190.00	
2011	\$1,076.98	\$847.48	
2010	\$446.46	\$124.00	
2009	\$594.00	\$170.00	

DISCLAIMER: The Nature Coast Journal is a monthly publication of the Nature Coast Intergroup. It is about, by and for members of AA. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Alcoholics Anonymous. Publication of an article does not imply endorsement by either AA or Nature Coast Journal, except where indicated.