



NATURE COAST JOURNAL



SAVE THE DATE

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FLORAL CITY PARK

MAY 14

Flyers will be circulating in April
with more details.



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GSR, hold a
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position, or
just curious
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Come
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APRIL 8,9,10
Gainesville

For more
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assembly age
nda.asp](http://www.aanorthflorida.org/assembly_agenda.asp)

ARCHIVES CORNER

Recently the second annual Florida State Archives' Workshop was held at Winter Park near Orlando, a central, convenient area for the whole state. A large crowd of archivists and others attended. The keynote speaker was Gail L. who is the Akron, Ohio archivist. Everyone was moved when Gail explained that the Archives are in fact a spiritual entity and much more than a collection of artifacts or memorabilia. She said that archives are a way of carrying the message, which should be free of myth and distortion and as such are a trustworthy and dependable reference for everyone but especially the newcomer. Alcoholics Anonymous always returns to a spiritual base that carries a simple message and it is this focus that keeps it from being fragmented in spite of it's worldwide scope and diversity.

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Hotline Stats

Calls	80
Wet	10
Alanon	2
NA	2
Info	66

*Came...
Came To...
Came To Believe!*

Contribute to the Journal!
news@ncintergroup.com

Keep It Simple

Sobriety Rocks

The blast he had at a concert with sober friends was the moment he was looking for.

I walked into my first AA meeting at 16 feeling like a reject. I hated who I was, and I came to AA to save a friendship and to save myself from the person I was becoming. But I wasn't ready yet. I didn't think I had a drinking problem because I was unlike all those drinkers I'd heard about: I never hid alcohol all over the house, or had the shakes. I was never a blackout drinker, never lost any jobs or skipped school due to my drinking.

I loved drinking and the effects of liquor, but how could I be an alcoholic? I was so young! I remember reading in "The Doctor's Opinion" that alcoholics cannot start drinking because the "phenomenon of craving" develops. There it was in black and white: I could not start drinking without wanting more. But I was a teenager who never had any serious consequences. Evidently, I had not suffered enough. However that first meeting planted the seed of sobriety. It would not do much growing until I finally returned to AA when I was 20.

Here's what happened. After a long night of drinking, I was heading over to a friend's place to continue partying. As I staggered along on the 6th St. Bridge in Pittsburgh, out of nowhere I saw blue and red flashing lights behind me. Immediately my heart stopped. I remember praying and asking God to get me out of this situation. I vividly recall telling God that I would quit drinking for good, and that I would start going to church if he would just get me out of this "little jam." I was taken to the police station and told to call my mom. It was 2 a.m. and I knew she was sleeping. I was so scared. I picked up the

phone and slowly dialed each number hoping that the police officer would stop me and let me go instead. The answering machine picked up. "Mom. Pick up. Pick up, please ... I'm in jail."

For the next couple of days at home I was completely ignored. Then one day my mom and I were sitting silently next to each other watching the news, and a segment on underage drinking and driving aired. As we watched, I started to think about my own drinking and how I always got into trouble. Even though this wasn't my first run-in with the police, it definitely was a big wakeup call for me. Then it hit me. I leaned over to my mom and came clean: "Mom, I think I have a drinking problem. I need help." She leaned over and gave me a hug.

The next day, I went to an AA meeting. Afterward an old-timer came over to me and said he was glad that I came, but because I had announced myself as an addict and because I was so young, he told me to try "the other fellowship." So I decided to give my way another shot, mostly because AA didn't "cure" me right away and I wanted to drink again. Badly.

I continued to drink for the next couple of months. Then one day my good friend in Virginia called me and asked if he and some friends of his could visit me in Pittsburgh. They were coming to see a rock concert on New Year's Eve. Despite the fact that I wasn't a fan of the band, I said of course, I would always make time for him. He told me he was two years sober, and that he was coming with his girlfriend, who was 17 and had been sober for almost 18 months, and his best friend who was 18 and had been sober for two and a half years, and a 15-year-old hippie who had 18 months. They were all my own age—under 21—and

were ... sober? I could hardly believe it.

We went to the concert, and for the first time in my life, I was living in the moment and enjoying myself without drugs or alcohol! After the show, they started talking about how young they were and how happy they were to be sober members of AA. I wanted what they had. I told myself that if they could do it, then I certainly could do it too.

I moved to northern Virginia to chase that sobriety. On January 8, 1999, I had my last drink. I picked up my first 24-hour coin and I remember crying, asking for help, and being so scared because I could never imagine myself taking a sober breath. I remember a list with phone numbers being passed around and the guys telling me to call them anytime, whether it was for rides to meetings or just to talk.

Young Peoples' AA got me sober. I was going to meetings seven days a week, calling people for rides and taking suggestions. I got a Big Book, a home group, and a sponsor, and most important, I didn't drink no matter what. I got to meetings early, helped clean up and tear down, and fellowshipped after the meeting, mostly at diners until 10 or 11 o'clock. Then we would go over to my buddy's house and play cards and video games, listen to music and talk until all hours of the night, sometimes until 5 or 6 a.m.

I celebrated my 21st birthday with 50 of my newfound friends—and we were all sober. It was awesome. I got involved in service work, worked the Steps and began to build a relationship with my Higher Power. I started to grow and mature in Alcoholics Anonymous, and I slowly started to love myself.

—Jak L., Irwin, PA



CALENDAR

Apr 8, 9, 10.....Area Assembly - Gainesville
 Apr 17 - 23.....General Service Conference
 Apr 24.....NCI and District 28 Monthly Meetings
 May 14.....Spring Fling
 May 22.....NCI and District 28 Monthly Meetings
 June 4.....Founder's Day Breakfast
 June 26.....NCI and District 28 Monthly Meetings

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Thank you for your service!

Anniversaries

Crystal River Group

March

Mel L...39
 Shirley M...34
 Jack H...32
 John K...31
 Ned C...29
 John H...27
 Mike O...26
 Marie W...23
 Sheila E...23
 Jen A...8
 Keith H...6
 Holly C...6
 Steve C...6
 Robert A...5
 Bobby H...2
 Suzy W...1

April

Danny P...24
 Ron C...21
 Harry H...15
 Mark A...9
 Scott C...5
 Judy S...3
 Kevin H...3
 Francis C...3
 Marlene P...2
 Heather C...2
 Tara S...2
 Barbara A...2
 Anthony M...1

Holder Way Of Life

Group

March

George N...28
 Al M...36
 Lynn M...1
 Blu A...33

April

Kathy R...19
 Lindsey B...5

Monday Night Men's

Group

March

Mike O...26
 Rick T...35

Rainbow Group

March

John S...29
 Sue S...3

April

Ted L...11
 Kate J...8
 Kerrie E...5

What's The Book Say

Group

March

Steve B...31
 Brian S...26
 Blu A...33

Women's Friendship Group

March

Linda G...36
 Evonne H...33
 Sheila E...23
 Candi A...29
 Ivy H...1

April

Liz R...25
 Fredericka L...8

Women's New Beginnings Group

March

Toni T...25

April

Kathy S...7

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Plaque in Dr. Bob's Office:

HUMILITY

"Perpetual quietness of heart. It is to have no trouble. It is never to be forced or vexed, irritable or sore; to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing done against me.

It is better to be at rest when nobody praises me, and when I am blamed or despised, it is to have a blessed home in myself where I can go in and shut the door and pray to my Father in secret and be at peace, as in a deep sea of calmness, when all around and about is seeming trouble."

**SEND May & June
celebrations by 4/20
news@ncintergroup.com**

*THINK
THINK
THINK*

Meetings, dances and late night coffee

A General Service trustee remembers how much Young Peoples' Conferences helped him get sober.

I first came to AA as a teenager and got sober in my early 20s. I had the great privilege to serve as an area delegate, and I am currently a Class B General Service trustee. I also had the opportunity to serve on an International Conference of Young People in AA (ICYPAA) host committee and its advisory council. While I have heard some say that ICYPAA and other young peoples' AA conferences separate young people from the rest of AA, I believe it had the exact opposite effect on my AA path. Without learning about service at ICYPAA, and being encouraged by those I met through ICYPAA, I would have never become a GSR. At the end of the day, regardless of any past or current title I may have held or hold, the most important one will always be my role as a GSR.

If I could ever go back in time, I would have loved to be present at the International Convention in 1955 when AA came of age ... and maybe have just a 30-minute cup of coffee with Bill W. I would also love to have attended the first ICYPAA in 1958. ICYPAA was not started to separate young members from the rest of AA. Two men, a probation officer in Canada and an electrician in Philadelphia, who both got sober young, decided that since AA is a program of "experience" they needed a place where young people could benefit from the experience of others.

While the Twelve Steps are the same for all alcoholics, we are all taught that we share only experience and not opinions. So back in the late 1950s, young alcoholics needed real-life

experience with life events, like going to a high school dance sober, going to college sober, dealing with disappointed parents, and the list goes on and on. A man or woman who got sober at an older age would only have opinions on how to go to high school proms or college sober. So while thousands of young members have benefited from sponsors who got sober much older, we often depend on our peers to assist with many tricky real-life situations.

I was given the opportunity of a lifetime to attend the fifth European Conference of Young People in AA (EURYPAA) in the city of Prague in the Czech Republic. What a gift. It was a real learning and growing experience for me. A past Czech General Service board member met me on my first day and took me for coffee and to a local meeting. While conferences, conventions, and, dare I say, even service events are near and dear to my AA heart, there is nothing quite like a real local AA meeting where people who suffer from the same disease as I do gather for the purpose of our Fifth Tradition. As I sat there I realized that AA was more than 30 years old when I was born, yet in the Czech Republic, AA did not exist when I went to my first meeting. If I had lived there when I went to my first meeting there would have been no local AA group to go to. I also realized what a significant part our literature plays in the building of an AA Fellowship in a place it has never been before. Members there told me how proud they were to recently print Daily Reflections in Czech and how vital the Big Book has been in their recovery. I have to remember every time a Seventh Tradition basket comes around that I am not only paying for my meeting's rent and coffee, but I'm also paying for translating the Big Book into languages for countries who do not yet have it.

So what did I find at that EURYPAA? For the young peoples' AA detractors, I admit I found loud music, chanting and dances, but I found so much more, and that is what I want to write about. I found AA meetings based on our literature, and in particular, meetings based on the program laid out in our basic text, the Big Book. I heard young speakers passionate about carrying the message to other alcoholics of all ages. I found AA members who were involved in service on all levels in the countries, cities and towns they come from. I found out that some of these members face others in AA saying they are trying to be separate, when in fact, all I witnessed was people being encouraged to become Three Legacy members of AA when they return home.

Most important for me, I met young members who come from places where there are few young people in meetings. And like ICYPAA, EURYPAA gave them a once-a-year opportunity to meet other young sober people and learn from their experiences. I had an opportunity to take part in late-night coffee and hear stories of real-life miracles in our great Fellowship.

I will forever treasure attending the fifth EURYPAA and count it as one of those mountaintop experiences I have had in Alcoholics Anonymous. I feel it fitting to close with my favorite Bernard Smith (former chairperson of the General Service Board) quote:

"You have found something great and awesome going for you. Treat it tenderly, respect what it has done for you and what it can do for others ... As long as one man dwells in the darkness you once knew, you cannot rest; you must try to find him and help him become one of you ... by the grace of God, may Alcoholics Anonymous last for all time."

—B.N., Spring Lake, N.J.