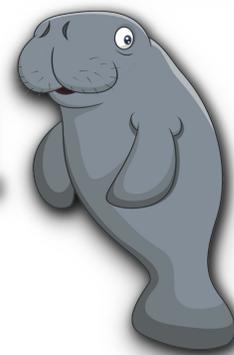


MAY 2016



NATURE COAST JOURNAL



Nature Coast Intergroup Presents:

The 2nd Annual

Spring Fling

Saturday, May 14, 2016
1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Floral Park
Pavilion #2 (Hill Top)

9530 South Parkside Avenue
Floral City, FL 34436

Games, 50/50 Raffle, Food, Fun and Fellowship...Speaker: Mitch M.

Hotdogs, hamburgers, rolls, drinks, chips, soda, coffee and cookies provided.

Covered dishes and desserts are welcome.

Suggested donation is \$6.00 per person.

For tickets, more information or to volunteer please contact Lynn D. at events@ncintergroup.com.

ARCHIVES CORNER

Recently there have been discussions as to whether Alcoholics Anonymous should have a presence on social media, particularly Twitter. At first glance the possibilities for breaches of Anonymity seem dangerously large.

On reflection however



Anonymity has weathered similar storms very successfully in the past. Those who

wrote the Big Book felt threatened by the prospect of being publicly identified as alcoholics. Subsequently the same issues were felt at the levels of press, radio and film. Anonymity, being a spiritual principle, was able to overcome all of these constructs especially because our very lives have depended on it. It is likely that it would envelop the electronic media just as easily and continue to both carry the message and protect the messenger.

WEBSITE STATS

- 430 visitors reached ncintergroup.com
- last month for 559 sessions. The average visitor went to 2.89 pages. The number one reason people visited was meeting information, followed by NCI calendar, resource links, NCI minutes, Young People in AA, Newcomers, audio links, Is AA for me, and Journal.

Step 5:

“Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”

Drinking & The Fisherman's Lifestyle

Many people began their AA journey by picking up the phone and making that life-changing call. Mine began with a call but I didn't know at the time where it was leading me.

I was living in Seattle after making a geographic from Kodiak, Alaska. I thought my drinking was just part of a fisherman's life style but it reached a point at which I knew I had to get away before it killed me.

I was out of work, my second marriage was on the rocks, and I blamed those around me for all my misfortunes. I found a job caretaking a boat, enrolled in some maritime classes, joined a health club and started a new sober life.

It didn't take long to discover there were bars in Ballard. Soon I was missing classes and the only thing I did at the health club was sit in the hot tub nursing a hangover. Once again I was sick, tired and miserable but had no one to blame it on.

One day I was in the crowded Pike Place Market area and came face-to-face with an old drinking buddy from Kodiak. I was happy to see him but his girlfriend kept on going and he had to move on in order not to lose track of her. He did write down a phone number on a matchbook cover before we parted.

A few days later, sitting in a bar getting numb, I

found the number in my pocket and decided to make the call. He brightened my mood by saying he lived not too far away and would soon join me.

After some pleasant talk, I said I would buy him a drink. Strangely, he ordered a soda. We were renewing our friendship and



remembering some of our wild adventures when he suggested we go to his home and get something to eat. The route we took was (I found out later) a bit out of the way so we passed by a doorway with a set of stairs leading up to the Fremont AA room. I didn't know what that meant at the time and all he said that he met with some friends up there and it helped him stay sober.

In my state at the time, I didn't think much about what he said, but a seed was planted. Stopping drinking was very much on my mind in the mornings after, but no matter how much I resolved to quit, I was passed out sometime in the evening, often in a blackout.

I began to have this inner conversation in which I would set a goal to stay sober for a week. If I drank, I would have to go back to that doorway, climb the stairs and find out

about these people who stayed sober. The debate in my head went on for several weeks. I never made it past Wednesday but I always had a rational reason for my inability to stay away from a bar or liquor store.

Finally I could lie to myself no longer and I went to the door, climbed the stairs and entered my first AA room. There were only four people there as they were in between meetings. I stood in the back looking over the literature and a cheerful woman asked me if I had any questions. I mumbled something about just doing some research and she invited me to hang around for the next meeting.

The rest, as they say, is history. I stayed for the meeting and kept coming back for more. It took awhile for me to identify but a strange thing was happening. I wasn't drinking! I didn't know why but something was working. As my head cleared I paid closer attention and began to hear parts of my story. Finally I took Step 1 and I was on my way.

Years later I thought about how this journey began. Seattle is a large city. What were the odds that out of all those people there was one in AA that I knew and he would meet me and help guide me to the help I needed? How was it that he lived near the bar and knew just how to plant the seed of sobriety in a way that I would accept? Is there a higher power guiding me in life? I believe without a doubt.

—Anonymous, Kodiak, Alaska

CALENDAR

May 14.....Spring Fling
 May 21.....Post Conference Review
 May 29.....NCI and District 28 Monthly Meetings
 June 4.....Founder's Day Breakfast
 June 26.....NCI and District 28 Monthly Meetings
 July 8, 9, 10.....Area 14 Assembly in Gainesville

Nature Coast Intergroup Officers & Chairpersons

Chair.....Rick T.
 Vice Chair.....Steve N.
 Secretary.....Jen B.
 Treasurer.....Paige B.
 Events Chair.....Lynn D.
 Hotline Chair.....[VACANT]
 Journal Editor.....Lynn G.
 Website Chair.....Steve N.
 Trustees.....Sandy H., Denis S., Janet B., Bill M.

Thank you for your service!

HAPPY ANNIVERSARIES!

Crystal River Group

Frani B...34
 Brad S...33
 Dean B...32
 Jim C...30
 Joe G...26
 Pete D...15
 Jim M...13
 David A...12
 Mike F...11
 Mika A...10
 Meg L...8
 Travis B...4
 Rebecca del C...3
 Jeremy B...3
 Travis E...2
 Darien H...1

Dunnellon Group Recent Celebrant

Keith E...9

Holder Way Of Life Group

Eddie H...45
 Paul T...38
 Susan N...28
 Martha G...14
 Joe R...10

Rainbow Group

Tammy P...34
 Lynn G...33
 Terry K...11
 Kevin...1

What's The Book Say Group

Michelle S...8

Women's Friendship Group

Robie M...43
 Lorraine T...33
 Sue E...32
 Joanne W...30
 Shirley W...29

Women's New Beginnings Group

Cheryl B...26

Won Rebos Group Recent Celebrants

Donny M...14
 PJ O...33
 Billy W...16
 Lisa B...7

Men's Step Group

Steve M...40



Plain Language Big Book

My purpose is not really to discuss the pros and cons of the idea of the publication of a Plain Language Big Book but rather to share my experience with the very idea.

I first heard of the proposal, going before the 2016 General Service Conference held April 17-23 in NYC, early in February. I was at a workshop in Orlando with my service sponsor. She handed me a copy of a rewritten version of our text "Alcoholics Anonymous". It was written for a readership with some education and a strictly contemporary vocabulary. I was appalled. Even the Steps were restated. I could hardly read it and, truthfully, didn't read much.

My thoughts were a) someone's already doing it, b) the original version almost forces you to work with a sponsor and c) where does this end??

Sometime later I was taking a meeting into the county jail. I was looking through the box of supplies and set aside, as I always do, the Big Book. Unless we're going to read a story I don't generally use it in institutional meetings. In that moment a, b, and c above looked very different to me.

Should we have a plain language translation of our text? I don't know. I doubt it will make it out of committee this year, but I'm open to talking about it. I think we ought not bind ourselves to dogma at the expense of our primary purpose.

Our Higher Power's inspiration was, probably, not withdrawn in 1939.

— Lina R.

SAVE THE DATE!!!

Founder's Day Brunch

Saturday, June 4, 2016
 10:00 am to 1:00 pm
 First Baptist Church of Crystal River
 700 North Citrus Avenue

For more information, tickets or to volunteer please intact Lynn D., Events Chair, at events@ncintergroup.com.

Contributions:

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 Crystal River, FL 34423

District 28
 PO Box 640914
 Beverly Hills, FL 34464

North Florida Area Committee
 PO Box 291634
 Port Orange, FL 32129-1634

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 PO Box 459
 New York, NY 10163

No More Secrets

A prayer to God sent him to prison— but it also set him free.

I took my last drink on May 5, 1996, and it was a doozy. The fallout from that episode was enough to open a window of opportunity and thrust me into the welcoming arms of AA. I had newfound hope, compassion, good humor, and a much-needed sense of belonging. Sadly, this would not be the end of my destructive living.

Getting in the swing of things wasn't hard. Home group, sponsor, Step and service work all became a staple part of my life. This made for a wonderful start, with the sky as my limit. On the surface, everything seemed well-rounded and balanced.

But certain parts of my experience, especially with regards to sex, had been deeply troublesome. Fear had a solid foothold, and when taking the Fourth and Fifth Steps, these secrets remained largely shielded and uncovered. Half-truths and outright omissions added up to half-measures. And as the Big Book promised, that availed me nothing. Unhealthy cycles, older than the drink habit, began to reassert themselves. I hadn't truly cleaned up the past; instead, some of it was swept under a new rug—the AA fellowship. One old-timer was fond of saying, "What's really scary is when you find out what you're capable of without a drink." That was enough to make me cringe whenever he shared it at meetings. For it had become my dark mantra. Free from the debilitating effects of alcohol, but lacking the courage to face the truth entirely, I gave myself over to other obsessions.

The fellowship became a double-edged sword. I desperately needed it to get straight. But the fear of being found out kept me from utilizing it properly. Establishing an increasing network of AA friends as a means to cope with the secrets, only added to fear, guilt, anxiety, and shame. God would not allow me a drink to numb the pain. So I chose sex. Newly divorced and without the ability to form healthy relationships, things were spiraling out of control.

God's inspiration for me had been consistent and clear—make yourself accountable. One day an honest prayer left my lips: "God, I'm too terrified to do as you ask, please make it so I have no other choice." My life, seeming to get worse, was then headed for an encounter with mercy. Marriage, the second time around, was an attempt to reinvent myself. We were both AA's, and I had the delusion that our family wouldn't be bothered by my secret past. Everything was normal for a while. Then self-centeredness came back, perhaps never having left. The stress of deceiving my wife was beginning to require a coping mechanism.

God chose this time to make good on my prayer. Someone I was unwilling to make amends with called, expressing their anger and need for help; help that would require my being held accountable. The moment had arrived. Fear made one final attempt to suffocate what I now believe had been my last chance.

After almost 10 years without a drink and three days wrestling with willingness, the Third Step finally became a reality in my life. Bringing the inside out into the light would be the only way to truly recover. Another simple prayer came: "God, I don't care what it costs anymore, I'm ready to follow you." Within five minutes, fully expecting to lose her, I told my wife whom she had actually married. The next day we went to the police, where I began to set the past right.

Today I'm in prison, and will be for many more to come. But I don't like to think myself a prisoner. Because of the AA's who found the guts to show up and clean up, I was eventually able to do the same. They proved that freedom is state of mind, available to anyone, even a guy like me. Everything is different now. My wife and I share a finer intimacy than either of us has ever known. Self-worth and dignity are intrinsic values that are revealed by God, not to be sought after in the spotlight. Respect, compassion, and altruism are a fluid aspect of my being, instead of things to be imitated. I see God's grace in life's every detail. There is pain, and there are still shortcomings. But today my feet are on the path. I can finally live AA, rather than just talk about it.

—Scott M., CampHill, Penn.

