



# NATURE COAST JOURNAL

MARCH 2020



## Spring Fling

**Saturday April 18th, 2020**

**2:00 pm to 5:30 pm**

**Whispering Pines Park**

**1700 Forest Drive**

**Inverness, FL 34453**

**Main Pavilion (PARKING AREA B)**

**Games, 50/50 raffle, food, fun,**

**Fellowship...Speaker**

**Hotdogs, hamburgers, rolls, drinks, chips, soda,**

**Coffee and cookies provided**

**Covered dishes and desserts welcome**

**Suggested donation is \$3.00 per person  
collected at the park**

**For more information or to volunteer please contact  
events@ncintergroup.com**

## Sponsorship

### Lessons from the Old-timers

*AA Grapevine, May 1950 & June 1950*

#### The Chairman tackles a tough question

The chairman had just opened the regular weekly closed meeting when Doc slipped quietly into the room. His lips were white and his hands trembled as he lighted his cigarette. "Ole Bill just hung himself in the jail," he muttered. "Fine sponsor I turned out to be."

The chairman eyed Doc, "I had another topic in mind to kick around tonight, but on the strength of Doc's sad report, and his personal reaction, perhaps we'd better give some thought to the subject of sponsorship. . .

"Let's see, Doc. You've been dry eight months. Ole Bill was your first pigeon and you went all out for the old boy. You gave him the wet-nurse treatment, and good. Net result—two months sobriety, a bad slip and an alcoholic's death for Ole Bill. . . For you, Doc, a sense of frustration and defeat. But don't loose sight of the thrill you had in helping another alky try to regain his rightful place in life. That he failed to benefit from your enthusiasm and sincere effort to help, doesn't make you a failure as a sponsor, Doc.

"You assumed your responsibility. You fulfilled your obligation to AA and showed your gratitude for your sobriety. You did the job of sponsoring Ole Bill in the way you thought best. Each case is different and has to be treated accordingly. But there ... *(continued on page 3)*...

**March 1st April 19th**

**Nature Coast Intergroup meets at 4:30pm**

**Followed by District Business Meeting at 5:45pm**

**Intergroup & District 28 meet at Shepherd of**

**the Hills Episcopal Church,**

**2540 W. Norvell Bryant**

**Highway (CR 486), Lecanto**

**HOTLINE 352-621-0599**



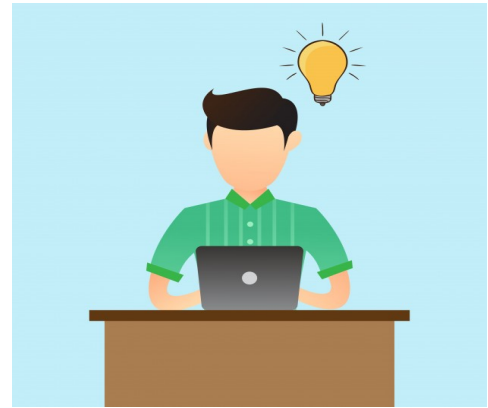
**DISTRICT 28 PRESENTS  
NORTH FLORIDA AREA DELEGATE  
ANNETTE D.  
PRESENTING THE PRE-CONFERENCE AGENDA FOR  
THE 70th  
GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 14TH  
1-3pm  
Fellowship Hall @ The Dunnellon Presbyterian  
Church  
20641 Chestnut Street**

**GSRs & DCMs SHOULD BE THERE AND ALL WHO  
ARE INTERESTED IN THE FUTURE OF OUR  
FELLOWSHIP ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND**

Special thanks to district 27,17,14 and 7

**COFFEE AND  
SNACKS WILL BE  
SERVED**



**FOR THE LATEST NEWS,  
MEETING TIMES,  
LOCATIONS, AND RESOURCES  
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[NCINTERGROUP.COM](http://NCINTERGROUP.COM)**

**KISS ME**



**SOBER**

#partysober

**CONTRIBUTIONS**

**District 28**

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Beverly Hills, FL 34464

**Nature Coast Intergroup**

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**North Florida Area Conference**

(Please write District 28 and your group number on the check)

Make checks payable to NFAC and send to:

P.O. Box 10094  
Jacksonville FL 32247

**General Service Office**

P.O. Box 459  
Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163

...(continued from front page)... are certain basic thoughts pertaining to sponsorship. . .With your permission I'll act as Mr. AA Anthony and try to give you my opinions to your questions on this most important AA activity. . .Let's have 'em."

**"Give us a couple reasons how sponsorship should NOT be used."**

"First—for personal satisfaction; second—to increase the membership role of the group, and third—by the member who's doing the sponsoring not to 'play God.' In other words, the only reason for bringing another alcoholic into AA is for the prospect's own gain."

**"How does one become a sponsor?"**

"He answers a Twelfth Step call and his prospect looks to him for guidance and help in working the Program. Or, you may be asked to take over some newcomer who is not getting along too well with his present sponsor, or some member of AA may say, 'I'd like you to be my sponsor.'"

**"Can a man sponsor a woman, and vice versa?"**

"Yes. Many successful recoveries have been recorded with man and woman sponsorships. Usually the initial call is made by a man-and-woman team, for the obvious sake of propriety."

**"How soon after a person has come on the AA Program can they become a sponsor?"**

"I've heard of persons being dry one day and going on a Twelfth Step call, with excellent and enduring results for both parties."

**"What are some of the important things to find out about a prospect?"**

"As soon as possible learn if he has a drinking problem. Does he know he has a problem. Does he want to do something about this drinking. Does he honestly want help—for himself, not because of the pleadings of family and boss."

**"Should you dig into his personal life?"**

"Absolutely. Get to the root of his marital, financial and employment situations, his age, domestic relationships and drinking habits. Assure him you're not prying, but you want to help straighten out his problems, and talking them over with someone who understands how he collected them, will release him from his alcoholic loneliness."

**"Does a person's education, intelligence, background, age or quantity of liquor consumed, have any bearing on whether or not he is an alcoholic?"**

"Experience has taught us—no."

**"Is hospitalization always necessary?"**

"No. However hospitalization affords an opportunity for drying out, and time to clear away the cobwebs. Physical condition will usually answer your question."

**"What's the best way to gain the confidence of your prospect?"**

"Qualify yourself as just an ordinary person, who had a drinking problem, but found happiness and regained self respect in a new way of life offered by following the AA Program."

**"Should you pitch right into your own personal drinking story?"**

"In most cases you will want to relate at least part of your drinking life. But do so in a manner that will describe you as an alcoholic, rather than the main character in a series of drunken parties and incidents. Give him the true picture."

**"He's tried all the usual means for controlling drinking, and is skeptical about AA being able to do any more than the others?"**

"Show him how you too tried various so-called controlled drinking plans, all to no avail. Tell him how you learned through AA that you drank from compulsion, that you had a disease, now recognized as alcoholism."

**"Is it wise to point out the benefits he can get from becoming a member of AA?"**

"It is providing you don't give him the impression that he's about to take a ride on the Glory Train. He must not expect to start at the top, or even the middle of the ladder, but rather at the bottom. Because its here, and only here that he'll learn about humility and self-honesty—two prime requisites for progress on the AA program."

**"Should you try to explain the Twelve Steps?"**

"First I'd tell him about the importance of reading the Big Book. In this he'll find a picture of himself on many pages of the personal stories. He'll also find an explanation of the AA Program and the AA ...(continued on page 4)..."

... (continued from page 3)... tools—the Twelve suggested Steps of Recovery. Should he ask for more, tell him your own interpretation of the Steps.”

**“How about the Spiritual Phase of the Program?”**

“Use your own judgement based on your observations of the prospect. You know how you felt about this part of the Program. Sound him out regarding his religious faith—if any, and try to explain what we mean by a Power Greater than ourselves. . . God as we understand Him. You can point out that you personally had never been able to stay sober working on your own, but that asking for guidance and outside help has made it simpler for you.”

**“Isn’t it good to let your prospect tell you about his drinking?”**

“Definitely. Encourage this. It will give you an insight into his habit pattern and will give you an opportunity to present the AA Program more effectively. Also, it will release the pressure on him. . . This is the way to arrive at a common denominator.”



**“How about getting him to a meeting?”**

“Arrange this as soon as possible. If you can’t accompany him, select someone whom you think will be compatible. Get him to several meetings, and quick. Tell him he can pick the group in which he feels most comfortable. Impress upon him that he’s welcome at any meeting, and can change his home group at any time he wishes.”

**“How about the prospect’s family?”**

“The most important move after talking with the prospect is to contact his family. Explain the principles of the AA Program. Also impress them with the idea that their boy has to do this for himself, and no one else. Point out that he is a sick man, but advice them that he shouldn’t be babied. See that they get to an open meeting and hear first hand some of the miracles performed through an honest working of the program. Try to keep in touch with them and seek their confidence regarding the progress of the prospect. Always bear in mind that the ones most interested in your pigeon have been through a lot of punishment themselves, and that they too have to make readjustments.”

**“Is co-sponsoring practical?”**

“An experienced older member in company with a new AA makes a most effective sponsoring team. The terror, loneliness and anguish of compulsive drinking is still fresh in the new AA’s memory. He is closer to the actual drinking problem than the older member. He can gain the immediate confidence of the prospect. Then the older member can take over and interpret the working of the program, giving the full benefit of his experience.”

**“Can a sponsor turn his responsibility of a new man over to another?”**

“If conditions indicate that the original sponsor can’t fulfill his responsibility he can select another man or woman, to assume his sponsorship. Explain to the prospect what’s going on. Maybe he’d like to select someone in his group to whom he has taken a liking.”

**“Is it part of a sponsor’s work to get a job, clothing and a place to live for the prospect?”**

“If your pigeon is really down to rock bottom, the sponsor should try to help him get going again. In the case of a man who has recently lost his job, it may be indicated for the sponsor to contact the prospect’s former boss and have a talk with him, and possibly get the man reinstated. Avoid making any promises, or in any way committing yourself as to the man’s newfound desire to live the good life. He will have to prove himself. Some bosses take a lot of explaining before they agree to try “once more”, while others are in full accord and understand the Program.”

**“How long should you wet nurse a pigeon before you let him go on his own?”**

The chairman smiled. “Brother, that is the 64 buck question. In fact, it brings us right back to where we started this discussion tonight. . . With Doc’s treatment of Ole Bill.

“All I can offer on that score is not to knock yourself out trying to keep a guy sober. You’ve got to think of yourself, first. If you’ve given your prospect the fundamentals and he honestly wants to stay sober, he’ll work the Program, and all he’ll require from you is friendship, and a shoulder to pour his troubles out on occasionally.

*Submitted by Dean B.*

## Letters and Shares

### Step 3... in action

I've often heard people say after a relapse, "a head full of AA and a belly full of booze" really screws up your drinking. Well, I got to see that in action this year.....

A friend of mine came by the bookstore I work in a few months ago and insisted he needed to talk to me. He had called ahead, a few times, to make sure I'd be in, and I couldn't imagine what on earth was so pressing, because our relationship was pretty casual. I had seen him in the rooms a few times. He had introduced himself to me as a friend of Bill's the first time he ever came into my bookstore, and I was glad he did. He struck me as a very sweet, honest guy and I was looking forward to getting to know him better. He also offered me some free advice in his area of expertise once when I called him. So, I knew him to be as happy as most young-timers are when they are working their steps and seeing their lives change. He had seemed on fire for the program and I'd run into him doing service just a few months prior.

So, here he was on his lunch hour and he said he needed to make an amends to me. I assured him that he had done nothing to me, and I didn't know what he was talking about. Then, he said, "Well, I broke into this store." I was shocked! "When?!" I said.

He explained that it had been last year, when our door glass was shattered and the cabinets had been disturbed, which I remembered clearly. I was incredulous. "But..." I continued, "you didn't take anything."

He replied, "I know. I had relapsed and came in here to get some money, but once I got inside that sober voice inside my head stopped me long enough to say, What are you doing?!"

My friend had clearly turned his will and his life over to the care of God, and God did for him what he couldn't do for himself. He is a sober member of our fellowship once again.

--Anonymous

### A Thank You

I'm so happy to be sharing that on feb14 I celebrated 26 years of sobriety. My life has been full of change and good health. All thanks to AA.

I was so sick I checked into detox and went to rehab and then a sober house. Followed by 18 months of outpatient. After getting out, I did 90& 90, and put my shoes under my bed every night and thanked my higher power, who I came to call God. I went to at least 5 meetings a week for first 20 years.

My hope is to continue to live one day at a time. I enjoy my life thanks to AA.

-B.S.



# Letters and Shares

## Maintaining Spiritual Condition

Have you made sobriety the most important decision upon waking? The first thought that goes through my mind is telling God that I am still an alcoholic and need help with my thinking and actions. I am convinced that my whole life depends on me not taking that first drink. Everything I have right now in life is about the prevention of that next drink. The Big Book promises us that we will recoil from a drink like a hot flame. I will never be cured, but we are promised a daily reprieve based on our spiritual condition. This sounds simple. However, this idea can sometimes feel like an impossible goal particularly in early sobriety.

I can only pass on what works for me. It may not be for you, but for this alcoholic it works. Today, if you asked me to define spirituality or maintenance of my spiritual condition; I would say that I am spiritually fit when I am aware of more than myself; when I am aware of the greater good, and when I can be of service to another person without expectations. I feel a spiritual connection when I am living in gratitude rather than feeling deprived; when I can find peace no matter what is going on in my life.

When my focus is on the good in life, I have found I am far better equipped to deal with unexpected issues, disappointments, even shocking events. Life is going to be life. Life didn't just magically become perfect because I got sober. Just like every other human, things happen; like losing friends and family to death, suffering illness, financial setbacks and all the other ups and downs of life. But by concentrating on gratitude for the good things I can maintain my spiritual condition.

This is my morning prayer; "Good Morning GOD, it is a miracle waking up to speak to you again. I am an alcoholic and sobriety is the most important thing in my life. Please help me and guide me, God, to follow your will. Amen"

I cannot maintain sobriety on my own, but this prayer helps me face the day and trust in God and be that person that others feel comfortable around. And I need those other people, particularly the ones in the rooms of AA. I have a routine during the day that helps with my spiritual fitness. After my waking prayer it includes:

1. Starting each day with an inspirational reading and short meditation.
2. Ending my meditation with a short prayer to my Higher Power, asking to understand the next right thing to do throughout the day.
3. Talking to another person who is in recovery every day (not always about recovery, most of the time we just talk about where we are in life today).
4. Seeking out someone to help – especially if I'm feeling frustrated or old thinking haunts me.
5. Taking and writing down a Tenth Step every day.
6. Reminding myself of all the things to be grateful for and when things are bad writing out a daily gratitude list.

Ending my day with a prayer of gratitude thanking my Higher Power for the blessings bestowed upon me through the grace which has given me sobriety.

It works for me because this is what I have been taught in AA. The founders of AA -- Bill Wilson in particular -- had a vision of what the recovered life looks like, and they wrote about that vision in pages 84 to 88 of the Big Book, which are devoted to the practice of Steps 10 and 11. It is simple. My sobriety depends upon my spiritual condition. My spiritual condition depends upon my relationship with my Higher Power and with others. Steps 10 and 11 when practiced daily reinforce these relationships and have helped this alcoholic maintain spiritual condition and thus experience one more daily reprieve.

*-Steve N, Alcoholic*

## ON TRADITION THREE

*EDITORIAL BY BILL W*

*REPRINTED FROM THE GRAPEVINE.*

*Submitted by Dean B.*

“Our membership ought to include all who suffer alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.”

This is a sweeping statement indeed; it takes in a lot of territory. Some people might think it too idealistic to be practical. It tells every alcoholic in the world that he may become, and remain, a member of Alcoholics Anonymous so long as he says so. In short, Alcoholics Anonymous has no membership rule.

Why is this so? Our answer is simple and practical. Even in self protection, we do not wish to erect the slightest barrier between ourselves and the brother alcoholic who still suffers. We know that society has been demanding that he conform to its laws and conventions. But the essence of his alcoholic malady is the fact that he has been unable or unwilling to conform either to the laws of man or God. If he is anything, the sick alcoholic is a rebellious nonconformist. How well we understand that; every member of Alcoholics Anonymous was once a rebel himself. Hence we cannot offer to meet him at any half-way mark. We must enter the dark cave where he is and show him that we understand. We realize that he is altogether too weak and confused to jump hurdles. If we raise obstacles, he might stay away and perish. He might be denied his priceless opportunity.

So when he asks, “Are there any conditions?” we joyfully reply, “No, not a one.” When skeptically he comes back saying, “But certainly there must be things that I have to do and believe,” we quickly answer, “In Alcoholics Anonymous there are no musts.” Cynically, perhaps, he then inquires, “What is this all going to cost me?” We are able to laugh and say, “Nothing at all, there are no fees and dues.” Thus, in a brief hour, is our friend disarmed of his suspicion and rebellion. His eyes begin to open on a new world of friendship and understanding. Bankrupt idealist that he has been, his ideal is no longer a dream. After years of lonely search it now stands revealed. The reality of Alcoholics Anonymous bursts upon him. For Alcoholics Anonymous is saying, “We have something priceless to give, if only you will receive.” That is all. But to our new friend, it is everything. Without more ado, he becomes one of us.

Our membership tradition does contain, however, one vitally important qualification. That qualification relates to the use of our name, Alcoholics Anonymous. We believe that any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. Here our purpose is clear and unequivocal. For obvious reasons we wish the name Alcoholics Anonymous to be used only in connection with straight A.A. activities. One can think of no A.A. member who would like, for example, to see the formation of “dry” A.A. groups, “wet” A.A. groups, Republican A.A. groups, Communist A.A. groups. Few, if any, would wish our groups to be designated by religious denominations. We cannot lend the A.A. name, even indirectly to other activities, however worthy. If we do so we shall become hopelessly compromised and divided. We think that A.A. should offer its experience to the whole world for whatever use can be made of it. But not its name. Nothing could be more certain.

Let us of A.A. therefore resolve that we shall always be inclusive, and never exclusive, offering all we have to all men save our title. May all barriers be thus leveled, may our unity thus be preserved. And may God grant us a long life –and a useful one!

-Bill W. (1948)

## Upcoming Anniversaries

MARCH 2020

### CRYSTAL RIVER GROUP

#### MARCH

Mel L	43
Shirley M	38
Jack H	36
John K	35
Ned C	33
John H	31
Christine M	31
Mike O	30
Sheila E	27
Marie W	27
Jen A	12
Steve C	10
Keith H	10
Robert A	9
Lydia B	5
Josh R	4
James S	4
Leon M	1



### HOLDER WAY OF LIFE

#### MARCH

Al M.	40
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### SOBER SAND GNATS

#### MARCH

Buddy H.	44
Jack R.	7

### REAL HAPPY HOUR

#### MARCH

Jim	4
Sharon	2
Jackie W.	2

## **WE NEED YOUR STORIES!**

Tell us about “what it was like, what happened and what it is like now.”

In upcoming issues, Nature Coast Journal will publish your brief stories about:

Laughter and Fun in Sobriety, Balance in and out of AA , The Steps ,

Living Your Dreams In Sobriety ,AA Humor/ Jokes

Send us stories on any topic sobriety

related!

e-mail: [news@ncintergroup.com](mailto:news@ncintergroup.com)