

Freedom Under God: The Choice is Ours

In its deeper sense AA is a quest for freedom--freedom under God. Of course the immediate object of our quest is sobriety--freedom from alcohol and from all its baleful consequences. Without this freedom, we have nothing at all.

Paradoxically, though, we can achieve no liberation from the alcohol obsession until we become willing to deal with those character defects which have landed us in that helpless condition. Even to gain sobriety only, we must attain some freedom from fear, anger and pride; from rebellion and self-righteousness; from laziness and irresponsibility; from foolish rationalization and outright dishonesty; from wrong dependencies and destructive power-driving.

In this freedom quest, we are always given three choices. A rebellious refusal to work upon our glaring defects can be a ticket to destruction. Or, for a time, we can stay sober with a minimum of self-improvement and settle ourselves into a comfortable but often dangerous mediocrity. Or we can continuously try hard for those sterling qualities which can add up to greatness of spirit and action--true and lasting freedom under God, the freedom to find and do *His* will.

For most of us this last choice is really ours; we must never be blinded by the futile philosophy that we are just the hapless victims of our inheritance, of our life experience, and our surroundings--that these are the sole forces that make our decisions for us. This is not the road to freedom. We have to believe that we can really choose.

Similarly, our whole society, and every group in it, will constantly face these identical decisions. Shall we settle for destruction? Shall we try only for the temporary comforts of a complacent mediocrity? Or shall we consistently face the disciplines, make the sacrifices and endure the discomforts that will qualify us to walk the path that invariably leads toward true greatness of spirit and action?

These reflections are meant to be background for the theme of this article--the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

AA's Traditions are the yardsticks by which our fellowship can accurately measure its progress--or the lack of it. In our Traditions we see such wisdom as we have been able to muster in a quarter of a century of living and working together. That these principles stake out the path we ought to follow, there can be little doubt.

As we contemplate the Traditions we see that they have two

main characteristics, and that each of these aspects reinforces the other.

The first aspect of the Twelve Traditions is *protection*; the second aspect is *progress*. We are first reminded what our fellowship's temptations really are and by what means we may best deal with them. This is our basis for a continuous moral inventory of our collective behavior--the first step to actively casting aside our road blocks. In the affirmative or positive aspect of the Traditions we learn, both directly and impliedly, how we may best apply the high ideals of sacrifice and willing responsibility, trust and love, in our relations with each other and with the world around us. Out of these practices flows the spiritual energy that moves us along the road to full liberation.

As we ponder *protection*, we see that our Traditions warn against the perils of public fame and power, against the perils of great wealth, against the making of compromising alliances, against professionalism. We are reminded that we may deny no alcoholic member his membership, that we must never create an authoritative government of men. We are cautioned that we should never force AA's message upon the world by aggressive promotional schemes, and that we should shun public controversy as the devil himself.

Such are typical examples of the protective prudence which our Twelve Traditions directly express, or clearly imply. Some claim that these warnings are nothing but the sum of our collective fears. Once upon a time this was very true. In our first years, every violation of these precepts seemed to threaten our actual existence. We then doubted if our rebellious membership could ever resist its great temptations. But we *have* resisted, and so we have survived. Therefore the stark fears of yesterday have since given way to a vigilant prudence--something quite different from unreasoning panic. Of course, we know that we shall always have to deal with the fearful forces which are released when the human

(continued on Page 2)

Telephone Relay

Happy Hour Boca.....March
 Downtown Delray.....April
 Wine Into Water.....May

Groups who take a telephone relay commitment help insure the hand of
 AA is available 24hrs a day!
 Thanks to all groups who participate!

THE STEPS & THE TRADITIONS

- STEP 3: "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him."
 TRADITION 3: "The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking".



(continued from Page 2.)

ego runs amuck--the same forces that are shattering the world of our time. Deliver us from temptation must therefore continue to be a prime ingredient of our every attitude, practice and prayer. When things go well, we must never fall into the error of believing that no great ill can possibly befall us. Nor should we accuse ourselves of "negative thinking" when we insist on facing the destructive forces in and around us, both realistically and effectively. Vigilance will always be the price of survival.

This is the protective aspect of our Traditions. But AA's Twelve Traditions should provide us with far more than protection against mediocrity and dissolution--and they do.

Let's now think about the positive, the progressive side of AA's Traditions; the disciplined sacrifices and responsibilities that we shall need to undertake; the degree of mutual trust and love that we shall need to achieve if we are to find the greater freedom we seek. The length of this article will not admit a full examination of all Twelve Traditions in this respect, but a few examples can serve to illustrate just what we mean.

Take Tradition One. It says that AA's common welfare comes first. This really means that our personal ambitions will have to be set aside every time they conflict with the safety or the effectiveness of our fellowship. It means that we must sometimes love our society more than ourselves.



Tradition Two--"For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority. . . a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants. . . they do not govern." This is a study in mutual trust in God, in ourselves, and in our service leadership. This has been one of our finest experiments and it has succeeded far beyond our expectations.

Tradition Three defines the personal liberty of the AA member. It says, in effect, that any alcoholic can be an AA member the moment he says so. Neither can any of us deprive him of that membership, no matter what his behavior. Perhaps no other society has ever staked out such a broad expanse of liberty for the individual as this. Every AA newcomer feels at once that he is wanted and trusted and loved. How well we understand his needs; certainly we have had them ourselves. Seldom has any alcoholic taken unfair advantage of that unlimited charter for freedom. We took this decision for individual freedom years ago. We are glad that we did; there has never been any cause for regret.

Bill W. (Reprinted with permission of The Grapevine, Inc.).



TRADITIONS CHECKLIST – TRADITION THREE:

1. In my mind, do I prejudge some new AA members as losers?
2. Is there some kind of alcoholic whom I privately do not want in my AA group?
3. Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or phony?
4. Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?
5. Am I overimpressed by a celebrity? By a doctor, a clergyman, an ex-convict? Or can I just treat this new member simply and naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us?
6. When someone turns up at AA needing information or help (even if he can't ask for it aloud), does it really matter to me what he does for a living? Where he lives? What his domestic arrangements are? Whether he had been to AA before? What his other problems are?

Heard at Meetings



STATEMENTS HEARD AT MEETINGS THAT TICKLED OUR FUNNY BONE:

You need to take all the steps to get to the top, but you don't have to build a nest on them. Someone said there are two ways to get to the top of an oak tree: You can climb it--or you can sit on an acorn. The Twelve Steps were written to help us climb the tree.

Description of a slip: "As soon as I took that first sip, I knew I was on my way to being lonely all over again."

There's only one thing two alcoholics can agree on--what the third alcoholic should put in the basket.

"My group is so advanced, we begin with the Third Step."

One of our returned veterans says it was sometimes hard for him to tell whether he suffered most from battle fatigue or bottle fatigue

You don't have a real hangover until you can't stand the noise made by a Alka Seltzer.

AA newcomers, and old-comers too, may wish to borrow the drink-refusing technique of the Irish poet, George Russell, better known as A.E. (not Alcoholics Enonymous!) When declining a proffered glass, he would murmur, "No thank you. You see, I was born intoxicated!"

There's an old guessing game we heard about the other day. Three drunks go into a bar, sit at a table and order a quart of rye and a jigger glass each. When all three have finished their bottles, one of the men staggers out . . . and the other two try to guess who left

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Mysterious Ways

...out of every season of grief or suffering, when the hand of God seemed heavy or even unjust. New lessons for living were learned, new resources of courage were uncovered, and that finally, inescapably, the conviction came that God does "move in a mysterious way His wonders to perform."

(Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pg. 105)

After losing my career, family and health, I remained unconvinced that my way of life needed a second look. My drinking and other drug use were killing me, but I had never met a recovering person or an A.A. member. I thought I was destined to die alone and that I deserved it. At the peak of my despair, my infant son became critically ill with a rare disease. Doctors' efforts to help him proved useless. I redoubled my efforts to block my feelings, but now the alcohol had stopped working. I was left staring into God's eyes, begging for help. My introduction to A.A. came within days, through an odd series of coincidences, and I have remained sober ever since. My son lived and his disease is in remission. The entire episode convinced me of my powerlessness and the unmanageability of my life. Today my son and I thank God for His intervention.

(reprinted from Daily Reflections, pg 85).

Words from Dr. Bob:
 "Much has been written, much has been said about the Twelve Steps of AA. These tenets of our faith and practice were not worked out overnight and then presented to our members as an opportunist creed. Born of our early trials and many tribulations, they were and are the result of humble and sincere desire, sought in personal prayer for divine guidance."

The FUNNIES



"Thank you for Daddy being sober, That was all I wanted, but thanks for the doll".

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SOUTH PALM BEACH COUNTY 26TH ANNUAL PICNIC

The South Palm Beach County Intergroup Association will hold their 26th Annual Picnic on April 18, 2010 – 11am to 4pm at John Prince Park. Bring your family and friends to this fellowship event

- What:** 26th Anniversary Intergroup Picnic
- Includes:** Raffles; music with DJ; Bounce House; Bounce Slide; cotton candy machine; face painting; and of course; burgers, hot dogs, dessert, soft drinks and water!
- When:** Saturday, April 18th, 11am to 4pm.
- Where:** John Prince Park - a map and direction are available at www.aainpalmbeach.org.
- Cost:** \$10.00 in advance, \$12.00 on the day of the picnic. Children under 12 are free.

Tickets are now available through your Intergroup representative or at the Intergroup office. Please purchase you tickets in advance, as we don't want to run out of food and supplies.

We look forward to seeing current and past Intergroup reps, current and past committee chairs, and all of you who have supported Intergroup over the years. This is also a great opportunity to meet your South Palm County AA community if you're new to AA or new to the area!

Volunteers are needed.

RAFFLE!!!



Win one of two special prizes, while helping Intergroup, in a 26th Anniversary Raffle. The first prize is a flat screen TV with a retail value of between \$600 & \$700. The second prize is a \$250 Publix gift card.

Tickets are \$10.00 each, and only 375 tickets will be sold. The odds of 1:187.5 that you'll be a winner of one of the two prizes, if you participate. Tickets should sell quickly. They are available at the Intergroup Office, and through your Intergroup rep. The drawing will be held at the South Palm Beach County Intergroup Picnic on April 18th. You do not have to be present at the drawing to win.

We ARE self-supporting
through our own contributions



Group Contribution Income	Jan 2010
Boca Boyz, West Boca	102.50
Boca Study, Boca	52.00
Divas at 830 AM	141.00
Downtown Delray Group	689.00
Intergroup Meeting	63.05
Journey to Freedom, Boca	174.00
New Beginnings, Wayside	35.13
New Life Group	400.00
Principles in Practice	50.00
Seniors In Sobriety, Delray	25.00
Serenity On The Beach, Lantana	160.00
Sober Sisters, Boca	99.00
Spiritual Awakenings, Boca	200.00
Sunday Morning Spiritual Group	350.00
Today Not Tomorrow, Boca	55.00
We Agnostics, Boca	15.00
West Boca Beginners	20.00
West Boynton Group	550.50
Women's Big Book Study, Boca	17.00
Women Living Sober, Boca	14.00
Young People with a Solution	46.88
Total Contribution Income	\$ 3,259.06

Profit & Loss	Jan 2010
Income:	
Group Contributions	\$ 3,259
Birthday Club	\$ 45
Sales	\$ 9,240
Total Income:	\$ 12,544
Cost of Goods Sold	\$ (6,019)
Gross Profit	\$ 6,525
Expenses:	
Credit Card Fees	\$ 148
2010 Picnic Deposit	\$ 213
Insurance	\$ 560
Payroll & Taxes	\$ 3,735
Printing SCAAN	\$ 325
Rent	\$ 1,378
Supplies	\$ 95
Telephones, Fax, DSL	\$ 402
Utilities	\$ 97
Total Expenses:	\$ 6,953
Net Income (Loss)	\$ (428)

Accounts & Balances:	Jan. 2010
Bank Accounts	\$ 28,103.81
Liabilities:	
H&I	\$ (498)
Payroll Tax Liability	\$ 783
Sales Tax Liability	\$ 33
Total Liabilities:	\$ (318.00)
Balance	\$ 27,785.81
Hold for Prudent Reserve	\$ (24,000.00)
Cash Available @ 1/31/10	\$ 3,785.81

A Message from your SPBC Intergroup Treasurer Spirituality & Money*

While the work of the group treasurer often involves many details, it is important to remember that the money the group treasurer oversees serves a spiritual purpose; it enables each group to fulfill its primary purpose of carrying the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers. This is the fundamental work of AA and must continue if the group must keep its doors open.

After the group's basic needs are met...the group can participate in the financial support of the Fellowship as a whole by sending money to various AA support service entities that include: 1) 50% to intergroup or central office, 2) 30% for GSO, 3) 10% to area committee and; and 4) 10% to the District...These entities use contributions in a number of ways, always with the aim of carrying the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

*(Pamphlet F-96- Reprinted with permission of AA World Services, Inc.)

Intergroup Minutes – January 27, 2010

Chairperson: Al A. – Excused Absent.

Vice Chair: Sheryl S. – Meeting opened with moment of silence followed by Serenity Prayer. Minutes from Nov. 25 approved. Intergroup Picnic at John Prince Park is Sunday, April 18 at 11 am.

Welcome New Group Rep's: Maureen K. – 12 O'Clock High; Lauren F. – Boca Speaker; Ellen R. – 2nd Street Sobriety; John H. – Friday Night Live; Jim M. – Serenity on the Beach; Tevie K. – Sunday Morning Spiritual; Mike C. – Sobriety in the Wind; Chloe W. – West Boynton; Valerie D. – Sober Sisters; Natalie O. – Today Not Tomorrow; Toral S. – Young People with a Solution; Adam Y. (Alt.) – Downtown Boynton; Aaron W. – One Day at a Time.

Treasurer: Ed T. – With special thanks to the Sunrise Beach Meeting, 2009 group contributions: \$52,556 vs. \$50,946 (2008). Total contribution income: \$55,963; annual event income: \$21,289 due to addition of the Intergroup Picnic, success of the Serenity Scramble, Gratitude Dinner, Birthday Club and Alcahthon. Sales: \$92,228 (up 35%). Expenses: \$91,053; office overhead reduced by 10%. Bank account balance: \$30,455; less liabilities: \$27,655. With a Prudent Reserve of \$24,000 (\$8,000/month), cash available: \$3,655. Thanks to all for your support.

Office Manager: Please see SCAAN for report.

Archives: Jim M. – Next District 8 Ad Hoc Archives Committee is in March. Please take archives survey back to groups for completion and return next month.

Bridge the Gap: Bari W. – More female volunteers are needed.

General Service: Zack S. – Special Needs Committee asking for contributions to support ASL translator for "Love, Faith and Life," the only meeting for the hearing impaired in the county. Next Quarterly: April 9-11 at Embassy Suites USF, Tampa. Founders Day: June 13. Next District 8 meeting: Feb. 14. Copies of monthly minutes available from Zack.

Group Information: Steve W. – New group reps are asked to speak with Steve W. or Bill J. Committee will begin visiting all groups listed in the Where & When for outreach purposes. Female volunteers needed for contacting women's groups.

Hospitals & Institutions: Vacant – Sheryl S. announced Sarah P. unanimously voted Interim H&I Chair at Dec. 12 Steering Committee meeting. Moved to name Sarah P. H&I Chair to complete Randi S.'s term ending July 2010. Unanimous. Sarah P. announced committee meetings held Dec. and Jan. Most commitments filled, though positions are open for women and coordinators are needed. Palm Partners adding 7-10 meetings per week. Hospitals, detoxes, rehabs approached with positive results; please spread word of H&I. Next meeting: Feb. 20 at 2 pm at Intergroup.

Public Information: Michael G. – Excused absent.

SCAAN: Dave G. – Please submit suggestions or contributions to Pam (southcountyaa@bellsouth.net).

Special Events: Lucas H. – Thanks for support of "Pioneers of AA" Nov. 28. Lucas will attend next Central House business meeting to request a date for the next event.

Telephone Relay: Willy B. – Relay phone commitments through May 2010 (see SCAAN for schedule). Please impress upon group members the importance of availability; contact Willy with any problems.

12th Step Committee: Nicola L. – Excused absent. Anthony D. – Please take 12 Step handout back to groups and return next

month. Only 8 new names have been added to the 12 Step list in the last 2 months; please sign up.

Where and When: Matt T. – Corrections to January 2010 printing: "Easy Does It" meets Tues., not Fri. (p. 4); last 2 meetings, "9th Chapter" and "Hopeless Variety" don't exist (p. 5). Update sheets will be provided; next printing will likely be in 3-4 months.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm with the Lord's Prayer.

In Love and Service, Liz S.

Office Manager Report:

January 27, 2010

A look at 2009.....

A lot has happened since our last business meeting in November..... The 3rd Annual Intergroup Open House was, I believe, quite a success. We had people showing up throughout the entire 5 hours, served lots of food and had only 3 cookies left at the end. My wonderful office volunteers helped set up, clean up, greet visitors, and process sales. We had a "Big Book for Beginners" ½ price sale – and all the books purchased that day have been distributed to newcomers. We had the book "A Camel Knows the Way", by Lorna Kelly available for sale that day. Ms Kelly was the speaker at our Intergroup Gratitude Dinner in November.

Our Intergroup events continue to get better each year....

The Serenity Scramble, which has found a new home at the Delray Beach CC, was a great success.....cold but funthank goodness Golfers seem to always have a blanket – so me, along with the many other volunteers wrapped up and jumped up and down a lot.

I loved our Gratitude Dinner this year... Great speaker, great friends & fellowship; and great job well done by Sober Sisters!

And....our Anniversary Picnic last April was a smashing success! If you didn't attend last year – mark your calendars this year!

Your Intergroup office continues to serve you through the efforts of many workers – paid, unpaid, volunteers – New & Old – Trusted Servants – and elected Officers... Many Intergroups are struggling – some Intergroup employees have very little help or support. Our Intergroup is here for you, because of your support and commitment to the Unity of A.A.

Many of you were praying for my Grandson and our family. Thank you. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted in love and service,

Pam T

MEETING CHANGES:

Boca Raton: Correction:
Easy Does It Group
Meets Tuesday at 7:30pm and not on
Fridays

West Boca: Remove:
9th Chapter Group

Delray: Change:
Downtown Delray has changed
the time of their Sunday Meeting to
10:30am.

Add:
Lambda Group has an additional
meeting on Wednesday @ 7:00pm.

March

- 13 **SPBC Intergroup Steering Committee Meeting**
@ 12:30pm in Intergroup Office
 - 14 **District 8 General Service Meeting - 5pm @**
Triangle Club
 - 20 **SPBC Intergroup H&I Committee Meeting @**
2pm in Intergroup Office
 - 31 **SPBC Intergroup Monthly Meeting @ 7pm,**
Central House.
- Note: Next Area 15 Quarterly Assembly Meeting: April 9-11

What's Happening in AA?

March 2010

- 10 **Boca Raton Speaker Group** is hosting a **4th Anniversary Speaker Meeting** at St. Gregorys Episcopal Church, 100 NE Mizner Blvd at 8:30pm. David M. from Philadelphia will be their speaker and all are invited.
- 14 **Eastside Women's Group** is hosting their **3rd Annual Coffee and Desert Speaker Meeting** at Elk's Lodge No. 1770, 265 NE 4th Ave, Delray Beach at 2:30pm. Beth D. our former Area 15 Delegate will be speaking. All proceeds will be contributed to the District 8 Special Needs Committee.
- 17-21* **The Florida Roundup 2010** is being held at the Deauville Resort Hotel in Miami Beach on March 17-21. Registration form at: www.floridaroundup.org
- 19-21** **6th Annual Soberstock 2010** at Camp Brorein in Tampa. \$35 Registration due by 3/10. Information & registration: www.SoberStock.com.
- 26-28* **"Reflections on the River"** a spiritual retreat, hosted by A.A.'s, (Al Anon's are welcome)! The 3rd, 11th and 12th steps of recovery are the emphasis for this week-end retreat. Held at the Riverside Retreat, 10 minutes east of Alva. FL h on County Rd 78 - near Ft. Myers. Visit their website: www.reflectionontheriver.com.
- 27* **"Why It Works: A Traditions Workshop"** with Joni E. from St. Petersburg, FL, our Area 15 Alternate Delegate will be held at the 101 Club, 700 SW 10th Dr., Pompano Beach, from 1:00 to 5:00pm. \$5 Donation requested, and bring your 12 & 12 Book!

April 2010

- 8-11* **Seniors In Sobriety 5th Annual International Conference** – Tucson, Arizona. Visit www.SeniorsInSobriety.org
- 25* **"When Love Is Not Enough"**, the Lois Wilson Story, a Hallmark Hall of Fame movie will air on CBS Network, Sunday, April 25th at 9PM EST. Based on the life of the Co-Founder of Al Anon.

August 2010

- 11-15 **54th Florida State Convention & 66th Southeastern Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous** --Doral Golf Resort & Spa -- info and registration at www.54.flstateconvention.com

* This event is listed solely as a service to SCAAN readers, not as an endorsement by South Palm Beach County Intergroup.

South Palm Beach County Intergroup Association, Inc.

2905 South Federal Highway • Building C, Suite 15-16
Delray Beach, FL 33483

24-hour: 561.276.4581

Email: southcountyaa@bellsouth.net

Web-site: www.aainpalmbeach.org

Office Hours

Monday-Friday: 9am - 5pm

Saturday: 10am - 3pm

Literature, Medallions, Chips, Meeting Lists, Cards, & Gifts

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Chairperson.....Al A. | Archives.....Jim M. |
| Vice ChairSheryl S. | Archivist.....Pam T. |
| TreasurerEd T. | Bridge the Gap.....Bari W. |
| SecretaryLiz S. | General Services Liaison.....Zack S. |
| Office ManagerPam T. | Group Information.....Steve G. |
| | Hospitals & Institutions.....Sarah P. |
| | Public Information.....Michael G. |
| | SCAAN.....David G. |
| | Special Events.....Lucas C. |
| | Telephone Relay.....Willy B. |
| | Twelve Step Committee.....Anthony D. |
| | / Nicola L. |
| | Webmaster.....David R. |
| | Where & When.....Matt T. |
| | Serenity Scramble.....Sandy B. |
| | Intergroup Gratitude Dinner.....David R. |
| | 26 Anniversary Picnic.....Brian O. |



Congratulations to our Birthday Club Celebrant!!!

Christine S.	4 yrs	01/22/2006	Sobriety in the Wind
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JOIN THE BIRTHDAY CLUB!

If you, or your Group, is celebrating an AA Anniversary and would like to be added to the list of celebrants, clip and mail this to Intergroup with a suggested donation of \$1 for each year of sobriety. This money is used to carry the message to all alcoholics in South Palm Beach County.

Name: _____

Home Group: _____

Sobriety Date: _____ Donation: \$ _____

Mail to:
South Palm Beach County Intergroup
2905 South Federal Highway – Building C – Suite 15-16
Delray Beach, FL 33483

2010 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous

July 1-4, 2010 – San Antonio, Texas

A Vision For You

75 years of Alcoholics Anonymous

Join fellow AAs from throughout the world in San Antonio. You can register online or download the registration form at www.aa.org. Intergroup also has registration forms. Pre-registration fee is \$95 (expires 5.10.2010). You must be registered for the convention in order to reserve hotel rooms. There is also info on airline and rental car discounts on line. **See You in San Antonio!**