

THE COURIER

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May 2023

The A.A. Group...

WHERE IT ALL BEGINS

Words from Bill W.

"The strength of our whole A.A. service structure starts with the group and with the general service representative (G.S.R.) the group elects. I cannot emphasize too strongly the G.S.R.'s importance."

Does your Group have a G.S.R

By choosing its most qualified man or woman as G.S.R., a Group helps secure its own future-and the future of A.A. as a whole. The G.S.R. links your Home Group with the whole of A.A. Please see A.A. Pamphlet P-19, G.S.R. General Service Representative Is your meeting "Open" or "Closed?"

The purpose of all A.A. group meetings, as the Preamble states, is for A.A. members to "share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism." Toward this end, A.A. groups have both open and closed meetings.

Closed meetings: are for A.A. members only, or for those who have a drinking problem and "have a desire to stop drinking."

Open meetings: are available to anyone interested in Alcoholic Anonymous' program of recovery from alcoholism.

Non alcoholics may attend open meetings as observers.

At both types of meetings, the A.A. chairperson may request that participants confine their discussion to matters pertaining to recovery from alcoholism. Whether Open or Closed, A.A. group meetings are conducted by A.A. members who determine the format of their meetings. *Please see A.A. Pamphlet P-16, "The A.A. Group", page 11.*

Is yours "a meeting" or "a Group"?

A.A. Groups are defined by the long form of our Third Tradition. However, some A.A. members hold A.A. meetings that differ from the common understanding of a Group. These members gather at a set time and place for a meeting for convenience or some special situation. The main difference between meetings and Groups is that A.A. Groups continue to exist outside the prescribed meeting hour, ready to provide Twelfth Step help when needed. Also, A.A. Groups are registered with General Service Office in New York as well as their local Intergroup Office and their District and Area.

[Continued on page 2.](#)

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS PREAMBLE:

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or Institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety. (AA Grapevine, Inc.)



The A.A. Group ...WHERE IT ALL BEGINS

Words from Bill W.

Continued from page 1.

Does your group practice "Spirit of Rotation?"

Traditionally, rotation of group officers ensures that group tasks, like nearly everything else in A.A. are passed around for all to share. To step out of an A.A. office you love can be hard. If you have been doing a good job, if you honestly don't see anyone else around willing, qualified, or with the time to do it, and if your friends agree, it's especially tough. Rotation helps to bring us spiritual rewards far more enduring than any fame. *Please see A.A. Pamphlet P-16, "The A.A. Group", page 26.*

Does your group utilize "An Informed Group Conscience?"

The group conscience is the collective conscience of the group membership and thus represents substantial unanimity on an issue before definitive action is taken. This is achieved by the group members through the sharing of full information, individual points of view, and the practice of A.A. principles. To be fully informed requires a willingness to listen to minority opinions with an open mind. *Please see A.A. Pamphlet P-16, "The A.A. Group", page 26-27.*

Does your group periodically take a "Group Inventory?"

Group inventory meetings are held to evaluate how well they are fulfilling their primary purpose to help alcoholics recover through A.A.'s suggested Twelve Steps of recovery. Some groups take inventory by examining our Twelve Traditions, one at a time, to determine how well they are living up to these principles. *Please see A.A. Pamphlet P16, "The A.A. Group", page 27-28.*

May ... The Fifth Month of Alcoholics Anonymous

STEP FIVE: *"Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."*

TRADITION FIVE: *"Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers."*

CONCEPT FIVE: *"Throughout our World Service Structure, a traditional "right of appeal" ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered."*

5TH Step Prayer: *"My inventory has shown me who I am, Yet I ask for Your help in admitting my wrongs to another person and to You. Assure me, and be with me, in this Step, For without this Step I cannot progress in my recovery. With Your help, I can do this, and I do it."*

TRADITIONS—CHECKLIST

This is a Checklist for Tradition FIVE. Reprinted with permission from Service Material from the General Service Office:

1. Do I ever cop out by saying, "I'm not a group, so this or that Tradition doesn't apply to me"?
2. Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the limitations of AA help, even if he gets mad at me for not giving him a loan?
3. Have I today imposed on any AA member for a special favor or consideration simply because I am a fellow alcoholic?
4. Am I willing to twelfth-step the next newcomer without regard to who or what is in it for me?
5. Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfill our primary purpose?
6. Do I remember that AA old-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and to learn from them?

Step Five: A Clean Slate

Those Tormenting Ghosts of Yesterday

Rick R. – Miami, Florida

We were all born with a clean slate. From the first day of our lives, we started to experience different emotions and those feelings had to do with the way we evolved into who we are today.

Instinctively we responded to the different Threats and Comforts, of life, and these were the things that established our mental Strengths and Weaknesses. I believe, our problems can be traced back to the conditioning we experienced as we formed our Mental and Spiritual makeup. The perception we have of ourselves may be likened to a chalkboard containing every experience of our lives. If we can look at it and be satisfied that we had a good track-record, we would be comfortable with it and lead a normal life. If, however, we find ourselves on the negative side of the ledger in our formative years, we may develop abnormal feelings of guilt and shame, that triggers the beginning of the compulsion to drink excessively.

In the beginning we get a temporary relief that tells us that we are fine, but it only lasts until we wake up the next morning and find ourselves in an even deeper quandary. We reach for the bottle, and again it gives us that temporary euphoria, and we repeat this process over and over until, something tragic in our lives drives us to Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) where we are encouraged to go through a process that can restore us to a more normal life. Steps One through Four are about surrender, acceptance, and discovery.

STEP FIVE is about disclosure and for me, it was the gateway to how I was to live the rest of my life. After two attempts at Step Four, I was faced with the decision as to whether my future was going to be honest and meaningful, or just a meaningless facade. Fortunately, for me, I took a leap of faith and disclosed all those, so called, *tormenting ghosts of yesterday* (12&12, pg.55). Looking back on it now, I realize that the decision to do this was the hinge pin for my thoroughness, with the rest of the steps. Had I not “Cleaned the Slate” at that time, I just do not see how I could have followed the spirit of truth and honesty, with myself and others that would have resulted in the peace of mind that I enjoy today.

My inventory had to deal with bad habits and deeds which had to be changed by the process suggested in steps six and seven. That was the easy part of STEP FIVE. However, *those tormenting ghosts of yesterday* were another story. These were not habits, but deeds that I had done as an adolescent kid that seemed unforgivable. *No one should ever know; I would take them to the grave with me*. Mustering the strength to take that risk may have been the most crucial step forward I have ever made.

My brain had been lying to me, after all; how bad could a thirteen-year-old kid be? That one decision is what I credit with giving me my life back and if I had not done it, I do not see how I could have given a good effort to the rest of the steps. I often hear members of the program that seem to resist looking deeper into their regrets and seem to build a wall of reasons why they do not need to, and I wonder if they might be caught up in the same dilemma that I was in when I took my FIFTH STEP. I wish I could reassure them that it is not worth the mental torment that it puts us through and that it may be wise to revisit that step and clean the slate. We cannot live alone with them; we must talk to someone about them. (Even A.A. old-timers, sober for years, often pay dearly for skimping this step (12&12, pg. 56). If, you are that person, I encourage you to try to garner the strength to take that risk, and clean the slate.

“ After all, we only live once. Let us not waste the opportunity to live a peaceful and contented life. “

“A Spiritual Overhaul” ... continued from April 2023.

Donald Wood – Ft. Myers, Florida

I gazed out at the ominous dark clouds on the horizon as I tapped my fingers on the kitchen counter waiting for the Keurig coffee maker to complete its task. The spring rain may be coming but not before my cup of coffee. Pretty remarkable, pop in the pod and in short order, a freshly brewed cup of coffee. Certainly more convenient but absent the delicious gurgling sounds of a freshly brewing pot filling the kitchen with the aroma that was as essential a part of the experience as the taste. I mused if the trade-off was truly worth it. Reflection for another time. My friend waited on the lanai and today's discussion topic was going to be another element of Step 11, the evening review.

My friend looked up as I walked back out to the lanai. “I guess I never gave this part of Step 11 much attention although I am not sure why, it is pretty apparent that the Big Book is suggesting that this evening review is a good idea, huh?” with a twinkle in his eye. “You think so? Nice catch.” I countered. “Did you and your sponsor go over this part of the book when you first went through the steps?” I asked. My friend's response was not unexpected, “I don't remember but maybe? I don't want to hang Jim out to dry as he helped me a lot but if we did go over this part it did not make a big impression upon me, so it is probably on me not paying attention .”

“No, I get it,” I responded, “I was the same way. I was too busy taking a victory lap for finishing my 5th Step. Sure, I recognized the need for me to make my amends as the next phase of the process, but I had no set timetable for that, so my Big Book went back up on the shelf, and I was set on cruise control. Or as the book calls it, *resting on our laurels*. It is like we have gotten to a point where we have seen that the program, the Twelve Steps, can enable us to recover from alcoholism as we have seen it work in others, and so we, in my case anyway, begrudgingly acquiesce to doing the work and after beginning to taste the 9th Step promises in my life I took my foot off the gas and thought I could just coast the rest of the way.”

My friend responded by shaking his head as if to acknowledge a common experience. “In reading this now, it sounds like more inventory work, right?” “Yes, exactly, but here is the catch. Think about it. Steps 4 thru 9 are to enable us to examine our past behavior, clear up the wreckage of the past, and provide a template for identifying and removing our character defects and fears that are blocking us from enriching our relationship with our Higher Power. Step 10 is where we're trying to clear up the wreckage of our day as it occurs, when we are upset or disturbed about someone or something, right?” “Yes, I am with you,” my friend responded. “But why do you suppose they come back again with another inventory, Step 10 should have covered it, no?”

“Well, I heard a speaker say one time that the 11th Step evening review is trying to tell me I didn't do a 10th Step that day. Boy, can I identify with that. Bill Wilson would later talk about our tendency to justify bad conduct at the moment it is happening through our ability to rationalize our bad behavior. For example, we tell ourselves that we are not being controlling when we tell someone what they should be doing, we are ‘just trying to be helpful’. We criticize someone from our group at breakfast after the meeting rationalizing that we were just trying to help others understand something he shared about in the meeting when in reality, our true motive was to feel superior by pulling him down. The temptation is to imagine that we had good motives and reasons for our actions when we really did not.”

“You mean our motives could possibly be less than altruistic?” “Ha!” I roared. “Love that word!” “Yes,” my friend responded. “Ever since we talked about that, that altruistic means concern for the welfare of others as opposed to selfishness, the word has haunted me! Mainly because when I looked at it, I realized that I never thought for a second about how my actions might affect others or to put other people first. I mean that is a load just trying to wrap my head around that concept and now you are suggesting that some of my actions might be cloaked in a darker motive to obscure what is at the core – my selfishness and self-centeredness, right?”

A Spiritual Overhaul – continued from page 4.

never thought for a second about how my actions might affect others or to put other people first. I mean that is a load just trying to wrap my head around that concept and now you are suggesting that some of my actions might be cloaked in a darker motive to obscure what is at the core – my selfishness and self-centeredness, right?”

“Yeah, that is how I see it.” I continued, “Think about it. In any definition of the word rationalization in the context of which we are talking about it, you usually find some variation of the word justification. Rationalization allows us to defend, to justify unacceptable conduct in our new way of life, such as being critical of other people, therefore masking the true motivation for the behavior, perhaps our own insecurity and ultimately a selfish motive. Now granted the Big Book does not specifically talk about this concept of rationalization, as I mentioned earlier Bill Wilson did address it in later talks and his writings but when you consider our tendency to rationalize less-than-stellar behavior as we go through our day, to establish another checkpoint when we retire at night is a stroke of genius.” My friend jumped in, “Or perhaps inspiration?” I smiled, “You beat me to it.”

“OK, so let’s get to it,” I said as I sat down across from my friend. “One of the things about Step 11 evening revue that I find amusing, although that is perhaps not the right word, is that from a directions perspective, as in telling us how to take this action, it could not be laid out any more clearly. What I find amusing, again, not the right word, is that this part of Step 11 is ignored by many alcoholics. Not sure why, I can only offer my own defense that after completing my personal housecleaning and beginning to make my amends, my Big Book went back up on the shelf, never to see the light of day again for almost three years. It is impressive how simply the directions are laid out in the form of ten simple questions in this single paragraph on page 86.” “Yeah, I hear you,” my friend responded. “It’s almost as if I am missing something, you know? It can’t be that easy, right?”

I shook my head, “If you just look at the black letters on the page then, yeah, I think it is that easy! Why is it that with alcoholics, when it comes to doing something we are supposed to do, we always manage to want to complicate the issue? We never go in the other direction, making it simple it seems.” My friend laughed, “Well excuse me for seeking fearlessly and diligently on the subject.” “Your selective recall of words in the book is truly amazing, you have a gift all right,” I teased my friend.

I went on, “I guess the best place to start is to reaffirm what we talked about earlier, that the purpose of this evening review is to discover any, let’s call it less-than-spiritual behavior that may have come up during our day that we may have overlooked unconsciously or deliberately. Or perhaps, as we talked about earlier, our old friend, rationalization, helped us to obscure the true nature of our motives. Whatever the situation, I always start my review by inviting God in and asking Him to direct my thinking. After that, I just follow the directions. Walk my way back through the day, where did I go, whom did I meet or interact with throughout the day and just answer those ten questions.

My friend inquired, “So do I just use my book to go through the questions?” I thought for a moment and then responded, “Tell you what, let me go ahead and print out a copy of the questions as your ‘starter kit’ for the Step 11 evening review. I have a copy on my laptop that I gave to one of the guys from the Sunday night meeting. Now I would suggest that set aside some time before you head into bed and go through these questions. At this point, with you not having any experience with this routine, I think that you would be best served by taking pen to paper for the time being.”

A Spiritual Overhaul – continued from page 5.

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I returned to the lanai a few moments later after printing out the document. My friend was staring out to the golf course but by his expression, I knew he was not looking at anything. He turned back to me and said, “We are going to be out of town next weekend. It is my wife’s mom’s birthday, so we are heading over to Jupiter to visit her. Is it OK if we get together in two weeks? That will give me some time to get some work done with this.” “Sure thing,” I responded. “Give me a call if you have any questions about the Step 11 list ... or just want to chat. Here is your worksheet.” “Oh, I will be reaching out. You are officially on my speed dial list now so you will be hearing from me.” I smiled, “Don’t threaten me,” I cracked. “Safe travels, my friend.”

Page 87 - “When we retire at night, we constructively review our day.”

Were we resentful?

Were we selfish?

Were we dishonest?

Were we afraid?

Do we owe an apology?

Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once?

Were we kind and loving toward all?

What could we have done better?

Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time?

Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life?

“Part of the magic of AA is that the Fellowship, like the loving God who presides over us all, never gives up hope for the suffering alcoholic.”

West Palm Beach, Florida, September 1986, “The Kid Who Came In from the Cold,” In Our Own Words



**IN OUR OWN
WORDS**

Stories of Young AAs in Recovery

For Ronda and My Family

Betsy A., Naples, Florida

(in honor of 20 years of sobriety , June 2023)

My daughter-in-law, Ronda, feels if I ever write about anything it needs to be about my recovery. I once was considering drafting a book about my lovers: Betsy & The Boys. "No" she told me, "the best thing is the Spirit and the joy of living you have found." That would be synonymous with the 12 Steps & Alcoholics Anonymous.

Growing up in Ohio related to lots of frequent social drinkers, I was exposed to all the mores of cocktails and the promise of evening camaraderie. We had a dining room breakfront with all sorts of crystal glassware for sherry, highballs, low balls, wine & cordials. I thought drinking was the rite of passage to being an adult even though it made me sick from the get-go. Graduating from high school during the Summer of Love 1967, I found that in the next 4 years I began my double life of looking like Tricia Nixon & living like Grace Slick!

I eloped in 1975 with the man of my dreams but did not have the personal skills to navigate a healthy relationship. We divorced after 7 years of marriage and setting up households in NYC, London, & San Francisco where we were blessed with the birth of a beautiful healthy baby boy in 1979. I tried everything to help me with my difficult mental pain & confusion: running, work, therapists, EST. Buddhist chanting and finally I reached the abyss attempting to end my life in 1985. My Father cried in the emergency room where they pumped my stomach for drugs and alcohol. A married couple came to visit me & asked if they could pray for me. George and Mary were their names. Funny, I thought, that was the name of my favorite Uncle and Aunt in New Jersey. Two years later I learned about Alanon from a newspaper article about children of alcoholics while I was cleaning out the rabbit cage where I was an aide in a kindergarten. I went to Alanon meetings for the next seven years (some open AA, too) until my denial broke and I was alcoholic too.

Tip toeing into AA in 1993 it took years to fully embrace the fellowship, the Steps, Sponsorship and all the other components of the Unity Service Recover Triangle. I kept coming back. I have a couple of slips; however, I will have 20 years of continuous sobriety June 16, 2023. Losing my Aunt, Uncle, Mother and Dad between 2009-2011 was the most challenging. I was able to be soberly and responsibly present for my elders by being in AA as they passed birthdays into their early 90's. I was with my Dad as he took his last breath smiling and laughing & I very much felt God in the room. It was a very joyous and spiritual experience.

If I keep trudging this road of happy destiny when I am 84 I will have 30 years! A sponsor now in Heaven gave me her 30 years chip which I have taped to my vanity to remind me of her love, light, and illumination! I have worked all 12 Steps with 2 sponsees and am presently working with someone new (using a lot of texting in the past 10 years) I have taken meetings to the hospital that saved my life in 1985, the county jail, did service in the Inter-Group Office, and been to the last 2 International Conventions. We flew to Toronto in 2005 and drove to Atlanta in 2015.

I have made lots of mistakes in sobriety as it seems that the longer, I am here the less I know. My character defects do pop up and I must deal with life on life's terms. Today I have FAITH (Fantastic Adventure Trusting In Him) and I have an Army of people to help me in all phases of my recovery life. I have had so many "coincidences of God's care for me. If any problem keeps ruminating in my head I write briefly what it is on a small piece of paper and put it in my God Box. Let go and let God.

I can never fully repay all that I have received in this Divinely inspired program. I have had a wonderful "psychic change" which Dr Silkworth writes about in "The Doctors Opinion in the Big Book.

The Courier and the Grapevine are on the top of my Gratitude List. I always have subscriptions for myself and have given them as gifts. God bless us everyone! PASS IT ON!

Resign from the Debating Society

Turned the Radio Off

Rick R., Miami, Florida

There was a good reason why I was so obsessed with that first drink each day when I woke up, or came to, every morning and I was not alone in this. As I listen to many fellow members of the share about this issue over the years it's very clear that it did something for us that it didn't do for the "so called" normal drinkers. Half-way through my second drink, I was at peace with myself, and everything was right with the world.

Strangely enough, after being diligent about understanding and applying what I believe to be the spirit of the Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) program to the best of my ability, I am at peace with myself, and I am fine with the world around me. The booze gave me that temporary euphoria that convinced me that it was the answer to my mental problems, but I didn't realize that it had a shelf life and that my tolerance for alcohol would be short-lived and that it would turn out to be my downfall.

We all have what seems to be a cross-section of issues that trouble us and cause our brains to work overtime, night, and day, on matters that we thought needed our input. I thought it was perfectly normal to let you know what my political views were, or if someone was driving too fast, or too slow, I should let them know in one way or another. I had many of these types of matters spinning around in my busy mind during all my waking hours. I believed that I could read minds and it was my responsibility to challenge all these matters and I burned a tremendous amount of mental energy on things that I had absolutely no control over.

When I became aware of what the A.A. program suggests I started to try to single them out and try a different tact on them. About 30 years ago I removed one of my most troublesome habits, Talk Radio, from my daily life. I simply TURNED IT OFF. I then stopped entering political debates. I am amazed at how much of a load off my mind that turned out to be, and the world got on fine without my input.

Worrying about what others were thinking or doing was another mental burden removed. I just started to look a little deeper and realize that they are a lot like me, and I began cutting them some slack. Empathy and Compassion replaced Criticism and Gossip and as a result, I have very few if any adversaries. On the highways, I just back off a little and let them in. I feel better about myself when I do these things. I simply "Resigned from the Debating Society" (pg. 26 12&12)

Alcoholism is a disease of the mind and a disease of perception. Alcohol gave us a temporary vacation from reality but if we think that it still has promise for us, we will have to put the rest of the program aside until we recognize the absurdity of that way of thinking. If in fact, we are desperate enough to trust this process, we can quit wasting mental energy on things we have no ability to change. To me, peace of mind amounts to *the absence of unresolved mental issues*. If we can replace all those EGO driven ideas of what the rest of the world should be doing, and replace them with them with an understanding attitude, in time we can lessen our mental load and life gets much more peaceful.

If we can restrain our pen and tongue, we can remove the word blame from our speech and thought, we can control the knob on the radio and if it tries to draw us back in ... we can simply TURN IT OFF.

“I inched a little bit closer to AA and a little bit closer to myself ... I was suddenly a part of things, no longer just a shadow figure pulled toward the edge by the centrifugal force of my own fears.”

New York, New York, April 2004, “Centrifugal Force,” Beginners’ Book



**BEGINNERS’
BOOK**
Getting and Staying Sober in AA

“How do I know when I’m doing God’s will? I don’t ... but, I KNOW when I’m not.

AA GRAPEVINE, February 2003

**Calling all AA
Authors !!!**

**Please submit
an article to**

The COURIER !!!

Email article to:

naplesintergroup@yahoo.com



Your Groups’

Activities

Can Be Here

Next Month.

To Highlight

Your Group,

Please Call Us:

Intergroup Office

239/262-6535

"WRONG HOUSE ... Became My Gift"

Roberta W., May 2023, Naples, Florida

I was born into a family,
Lord knows, I don't know why,
They would scream and taunt, and curse
and Hit,
And *Every Truth* became a lie !

At four, my favorite spot to hide,
was between the toilet and the tub,
I'd bang my head against them,
Feeling Peace with every thud.

It would drown out all the sirens..
And scary Blue Men at my place,
But my Dad was a Policeman too...
And he'd charm them, like a Snake.

So off the men in blue would go,
And I'd be hiding, like a mouse,
They couldn't see what I saw...
There were *Monsters in My House!*

The *Monsters* really liked it here,
They made my house their home,
And they feasted on my childhood,
Stole my laughter, ate my soul.

Where does one go at 3, or 4?
And 5, or 6, or 7??
Surely God wouldn't want me here..
I belonged with Him, in Heaven.

There were some nice surprises though,
I thought my Mom loved me a bunch!
My Teacher was invited to my Home,
And my Mom was serving Lunch!!

I could NOT contain my happiness!
Mom dressed me to the nines,
But the demons showed their hiding place.
They were in my mother's eyes.

Mom had planned this little meeting as Ms.
Carter sat for lunch,
Then Mom told her how I wet the bed,
And I was fresh,
And ate too much.

The ruse was up, I couldn't Pretend
To fit in with all the rest...
Shame had returned and I had failed..
The Normal, Little-Girl Test.

My Dad was different though,
Incestual... yet kind,
He'd lay on top of me, Alone,
And I'd go Deaf, and Dumb, and Blind.

No need for gory details,
Atrocities abound,
But I grew up and sought some help,
And there were *Riches to be Found!*

A man, a Home, a Family,
I had finally had it all !
There was Laughter, Peace & Happiness,
But *Always...Alcohol.*

Addiction lands so quietly,
Through my blood...and through my daughters',
It tricks, it Maims,
It robs your soul...and finally...
It just Slaughters.

But somehow God was watching,
Picked me up from broken glass.
And I surrendered to Him, Finally,
And I'm kickin' the Devil's Ass !!

One day at a time, our Fellowship says,
And I'm living Grateful, in Society.
You all help me with the greatest Gift...
For today... I have Sobriety !

PREDATORY BEHAVIOR IN AA

Is this still an issue in the 21st Century?

Recently, a young woman that I've known to be in AA for several years approached me stating that she enjoyed the meetings we were holding but that she was hesitant about joining the group. Before committing, she wanted to know if someone in particular (a name I had never heard) ever came to our meetings. When I told her the name she gave me was unfamiliar, she explained that she was trying to get away from that person, whom she described as a predator.



I was surprised to hear her story as the types of incidents that she described (i.e., stalking behavior) have become so rare in the meetings that I frequent that I simply forgot that this was still an issue in some parts of A.A. Apparently, it does still exist.

Several years ago this issue became prominent in AA following the death of a young woman in California who had been harassed and stalked by a predator in her town. It seems that, wherever she went, the offender would find her. She complained frequently, but found little support. The offending behavior worsened until her untimely demise.

Alcoholics Anonymous took an aggregate of such incidents and launched a campaign to put an end to predatory behavior and couched it in terms of "Safety in AA." It included other unwanted behavior such as bullying. At our clubhouse, we took the bull by the horns and developed our own policy stating, in part, that:

[We] adhere "to the spiritual principles (Steps, Traditions, and Concepts) of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are committed to creating an environment free from discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. All individuals should be aware of how their personal comments and behaviors can affect others and in some instances, create a harassing or hostile experience. To this end ... [we] ...members and guests of our facility, activities, and events must honor these guidelines."

I assured our new friend that she had found a safe haven and that if she experienced any of the behavior she had described attending any of our groups that she should call me immediately. I promised that the issue would be dealt with swiftly and decisively.

Our bylaws contain a Code of Conduct for our board of directors and club members which state, again, in part, that "no member ... shall take any action that may be perceived as placing any other member ... at a disadvantage. Stated another way, we don't take advantage of each other. Such actions may include, but are not limited to, "Thirteen Stepping."

Our members, or prospective members, "need to be able to approach us with a reasonable expectation that their welfare is of paramount concern to us and they need to be able to rest assured that we do not view them as a resource to be exploited for personal gain." We are committed to this ideal and hope that you will join us in helping to make AA a safe space for everyone who reaches out to us for help.

~ Jerry E., Naples, FL, May 6, 2023

"An empty house decays more rapidly than one that is lived in."

**Winston-Salem, North Carolina, April 1953,
"Kites and Planes Rise Against the Wind", AA Grapevine**



Playing Checkers or Playing Chess

How Far Should I Go?

Rick R., Miami, Florida

Let me preface this article by saying that I am not being critical of anybody for any reason concerning where a person is along the path of sobriety. My only motive for writing it is to give some perspective concerning the possibilities which lie ahead based on the thoroughness we applied to the understanding of the steps as we put some distance between us and that last drink.

I am one of the fortunate ones that showed up at the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) on October 15th, 1969, at the age of 28 and have never wanted a drink since that day. I was the youngest person in the room for my first couple of years as the drug-using population of the 60s generation had not started showing up until the mid-70s and they seemed to bottom out at a much earlier in life than the common variety alcoholic who seldom came to us until they were in their mid-40s ... "mid-life crisis."

In my first two years, I was like everyone else when it came to the subject of thoroughness in the beginning and I was selective about what I would do with the program and about the things I would dismiss as unnecessary since I had absolutely no desire to drink. I was slow and deliberate when it came to taking the steps. It was almost two years before I attempted to do the 4th step inventory and being in the Navy at the time, I was shipped out to an oil tanker in the Tonkin gulf Yacht Club where I spent four months in and out of port hauling fuel to the U.S. fleet.

I had many nights at sea thinking and longing to be back with my home group and contemplating what I had planned to do when I got home. When I did return home, I reopened my Fourth Step Inventory with a new attitude about the steps and realize that my original attempt was a very shallow scam and I burned it and started over and got it right the second time around. That, I think was the turning point in my attitude about thoroughness. I addressed those so-called tormenting ghosts of yesterday, shared them with another trusted member of the program and it just lifted the weight off my shoulders. That I believe, made the rest of the program much easier.

I have attended a weekly step study meeting ever since and it helps me to measure my growth as I cycle through the Steps and Traditions several times a year. There is a term on page 85 in the Big Book and coincidentally on page 85 in the 12&12 that suggest this is no time to rest on our laurels, and I take that very seriously because of the unexpected results I have experienced concerning the quality of life I Live Today ... Steps 10, 11, and 12 are referred to as the "Maintenance Steps."

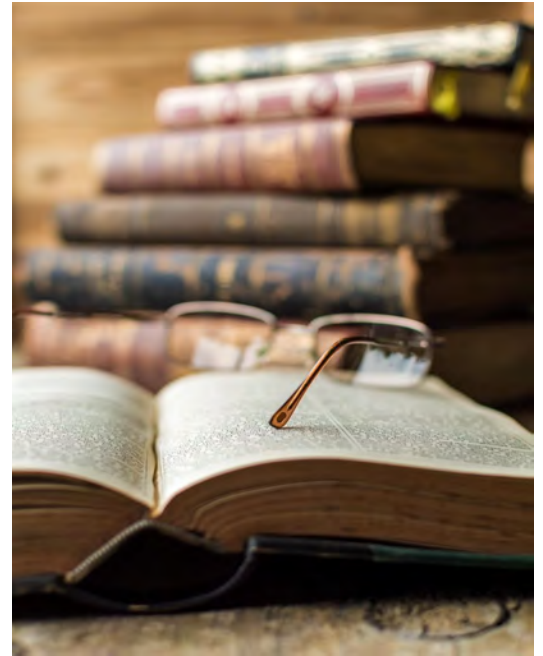
With many years of sobriety, I could rest on my laurels and vegetate, but I would have no purpose in life and if I neglected responsibilities my life worth would suffer. Being judgmental about the behavior of others, I would be playing God and we all know that isn't right unless I am perfect myself. Scott Peck defines love as ... caring for and nurturing another person. And, I can love everyone even if they can't return the gesture. It just means wishing the best for them ... No Exceptions.

These are just a few ideas, but there are many ways to continue to have a purpose. If you don't, you may want to revisit the 4th through the 9th steps and get a better perspective on how to become a more useful member of society and be fulfilled. Or, you may be satisfied just not drinking one day at a time. That's entirely your choice.

I heard a sportscaster describing different head coaches of professional football teams ... and, he said some are playing CHECKERS and a few are playing CHESS. LIFE IS TOO GOOD TO WASTE.

“While I wouldn’t recommend that anyone become an alcoholic, I believe that sober alcoholics living the AA way of life have been blessed with a gift. It’s a gift that can’t be bought, that can’t be won in a lottery, that can’t be stolen, forged, or rented.”

Edenvale, Gauteng, South Africa, October 1996, “A Healthy Appetite for Beer,” The Best of the Grapevine, Volume 3



AA Volunteer Opportunities



*Naples Area
Intergroup*

Mornings: 9:00 to 12:30

Afternoon: 12:30 to 4:00

(One morning or afternoon each week.)

and, Telephone Helpline

After-hours, various days.

1-year continuous sobriety.

For information: 239/262-6535



A Memorial Day Weekend

It's in The Book!
May 26 - 29, 2023



Seating Limited to 250 People!

Friday-Monday!
WEEKEND SCHEDULE

Friday

7:00 p.m. Speaker: Marne D., Las Vegas
8:15 p.m. "Bill's Own Story" (104 minutes)

Saturday

10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Big Book Workshop
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Banquet Dinner
7:00 p.m. Speaker: Bob D., Las Vegas, NV
8:15 p.m. "My Name is Bill W." (100 minutes)

Sunday

10:00 a.m. Big Book Workshop
7:00 p.m. Speaker: Don L., Bellingham, WA
8:15 p.m. "Bill W." (104 minutes)

Monday

10:00 a.m. "Dawn of Hope"
11am Last Session

Saturday Night Banquet!

Conference Registration
(Register online at www.serenityclubswfl.org)

\$45.00 Per Person

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

ZIP _____ PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

	Registration Per Person	\$45.00
<i>Optional</i>	Saturday Banquet Night (Chicken)	\$40.00
or	Saturday Banquet Night (Salmon)	\$40.00
	<i>[Only 150 banquet tickets available]</i>	
	TOTAL	_____

Make Checks Payable To:
and Mail To:

The Serenity Club
12435 Collier Blvd., Ste. 107
Naples, FL 34116

EMBASSY SUITES
FT. MYERS-ESTERO

10450 Corkscrew Commons Dr, Estero, FL 33928

239-949-4222

Mention Group Code: **BBW**

Conference Rate Only \$159.⁰⁰

Free Parking, Free Wi-Fi & Free Breakfast (hotel guests)



**Naples, FL
2023**

June 16, 17, 18

**A Group Of 400 of your
Closest Friends**

A Conference for AA & Al-Anon Women

Beth H.	Cyndi M.	Sara Jean F.
Destin	Louisville	Marco Island
Lori G.(AFG)	Polly P.	Kim M.(AFG)
Oklahoma City	Jacksonville	Colorado Springs
Mari G- Toronto		

Sisters By The Sea

A Journey through the Steps...The Stairway to Serenity

Hotel Information Hilton Naples

5111 Tamiami Trail, Naples, FL 34103

**Free Shuttle To The Beach
Free Beach Chairs ~ Free Wi Fi
Free Parking**

Rates available until May 1st, 2023

\$160 Per Night Single or Double

(239)430-4900 Group Code: SBS

**EARLY BIRD SPLASH PARTY
POOLSIDE 12-3 FRIDAY**

Sorry No Refunds Questions call
Peggy P.E. (239)269-7651 or

Sisters By The Sea Registration

One form per person or register online at

www.SistersbytheSea.com

Name _____

Phone _____ SOB _____

EMAIL: _____

**Early Bird January 1st \$45 Registration
Registration \$50.00 Banquet \$50.00 Choice**

Fish _____ Chicken _____ Vegan _____

**Make Checks Payable to:
Sisters By The Sea**

**PO Box 305 Marco Island, FL. 34146 or
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sisters-by-the-sea-2023-tickets-410707385847>**



Willough Visions

11103 Tamiami Trail East

**Is Your Group Looking For A
Service Opportunity ?**

**We are looking for group leaders to commit to cover
1 meeting per week for 1 month commitments
Providing (1 Chairperson and 2 Speakers)**

This is your opportunity to carry the message that was so freely carried to you.

Wednesday Nights 7pm

**Please contact Peggy P.E.
(239)269-7651**

Reserve A Spot for the Month of your Choice While Available



66TH FLORIDA STATE CONVENTION 2023

THURSDAY AUGUST 10 - SUNDAY AUGUST 13

WWW.FLORIDASTATECONVENTION.COM

SADDLEBROOK RESORT - WESLEY CHAPEL, FL 33543

WWW.SADDLEBROOK.COM

PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES



AA, Al-Anon, Alateen, Spanish Speaking, LGBTQIA, YPG, First Nations, Old Timer's Panel, Marathon Meetings, Workshops, and Archives Display; Friday and Saturday Banquets, Saturday BBQ lunch and Ice Cream Socials; Sports Activities include Golf, 5K Walk/Run, Pickle Ball, Morning Yoga, and Escorted Motorcycle Ride; Dances and Entertainment including South Florida's own "The A.A. Service Manual: The Musical", Saturday Pool Party, and much more...

ASL interpretation at main conference's speaker meetings.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Marty J. - Vancouver, B.C., Canada

Aaron Z. - Molalla, OR

Larcine G. (Al-Anon) - Hawthorne, CA

Candice M. - Los Angeles, CA

Chris R. - Ingram, TX

Myers R. - Ingram, TX

Marion M. - Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Cathy C. - Tampa, FL

Jane D. L. - Tallahassee, FL

HOST HOTEL INFORMATION

SADDLEBROOK RESORT
A PREMIER MEETING, GOLF, AND TENNIS RESORT
5700 SADDLEBROOK WAY WESLEY CHAPEL, FL 33543
WWW.SADDLEBROOK.COM
800-729-8383

CONVENTION CODE: 66FSC

HOTEL RESERVATIONS START ON AUGUST 3, 2022

HOTEL RESERVATION LINK: [HTTPS://BE.SYNXIS.COM/?HOTEL=39244&CHAIN=28394&CONFIG=INITIALCONFIG&THEME=INITIALTHEME&ARRIVE=2023-08-10&DEPART=2023-08-11&ADULT=1&CHILD=0&GROUP=FSC](https://be.synxis.com/?HOTEL=39244&CHAIN=28394&CONFIG=INITIALCONFIG&THEME=INITIALTHEME&ARRIVE=2023-08-10&DEPART=2023-08-11&ADULT=1&CHILD=0&GROUP=FSC)

RATES:

STANDARD ROOM - \$135

ONE BEDROOM SUITE - \$155

TWO BEDROOM SUITE - \$265

RATES WILL BE HONORED 3 DAYS BEFORE AND 3 DAYS AFTER THE CONVENTION DATES BASED ON AVAILABILITY



ALL ROOMS ARE SUBJECT TO STATE AND LOCAL TAXES

THIS HOTEL IS NON-SMOKING

CHECK-IN 4 PM - CHECK-OUT 11 AM

**Announcing the NEXT SWFL
Meeting Exchanges!! (AKA- "Booking meeting")**

Saturdays- 5/6; 8/5; 11/4, 2023 All @ 7:00 – 9:00am

St. Mary's Episcopal Church

9801 Bonita Beach Rd SE, Bonita Springs

ALL GROUPS MAY PARTICIPATE!

THERE IS NO REQUIREMENT FOR HOW MANY EXCHANGES A GROUP MAKES...

JUST AS LONG AS THERE IS AN EXCHANGE.

"Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety."

- Carrying the message to groups we would not normally attend and having them do the same.
- Help groups who may be struggling for attendees and members.
- Expand our connections in our recovery with other meetings in a post-pandemic world.
- Bring newcomers and other recovering alcoholics to more meetings outside their group. (*ahem**, sponsors take note...)
- Experience the "meeting before the meeting and a meeting after the meeting."
- Other meeting types, such as big book, step, discussion, beginner leads, or others, may also be exchanged for speaking commitments as some groups do not have speaker meetings.
- Expand our sober support and social networks.
- Increased service opportunities for your group members.
- Intergroup and District Committees, plus Corrections; Institutions; PI/CPC; & Intergroup Offices, FCYPAA, Grapevine, and other AA-related service committees are invited to attend to get volunteers too!

"To keep this, we have to give it away!"

*For more detailed information on how you and your groups can participate,
email Tom B @ tcb4457@gmail.com*



JOIN THE GRAPEVINE BUNCH WE ARE NOT A GLUM LOT



Help **Grapevine** & Victor E increase involvement of AA's "Meeting in Print".
Service is our Legacy.
Grapevine Representatives Needed.
Snowbirds WELCOME!
At each meeting we read a story from the current Grapevine.

Grapevine Committee meetings are every other 3rd Tuesday @ 5:30 PM at the Intergroup Office next to the 24-hour Club on Pine Ridge Road.

We hope to increase each AA members knowledge of **Grapevine** -
The International Journal of AA.
Be the first to have a Grapevine Representative in your Home Group!



FINANCES**Apr23****YTD23****Income**

Literature/Merchandise	\$3,830	\$19,422
Group Contributions	3,464	12,707
AA Birthdays	205	205
Faithful Five	80	140
Individual/Anonymous	-	450
Total Income	7,580	32,924

Expenses

Bank/Credit Card Fees	93	446
Licenses/Permits	200	200
Office Supplies	403	1,615
Office Improve/Repair	-	-
www Hosting	-	-
Payroll	2,154	8,617
Payroll Tax	-	-
Postage	10	20
Printing	65	210
Purchases/Lit./Merch.	3,754	13,492
Insurance	-	-
Rent	500	2,500
Sales Tax	435	1,630
Telephone/www	224	906
Utilities	100	500
Computer Equipment	217	-
Computer Software	139	559
Computer/Maintain	-	-
Quarterlies / Travel		220
Total Expenses	8,295	31,601
Net Ordinary Income	(\$715)	\$1,323

Gratitude Dinner

Other Expenses

NET OTHER INCOME**NET INCOME** (\$715) \$1,332

**Thank You to all who contributed to
Naples Intergroup / Central Office.**

Spirituality and Money

"While the work of the group treasurer often involves many details, it is important to remember that the money the treasurer oversees serves a spiritual purpose: it enables each group to fulfill its primary purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers. This is the fundamental work of A.A. and to continue it the group must keep its doors open. The group treasurer is an important part of this Twelfth Step work."

SELF-SUPPORT:

Where Money and Spirituality Mix

Naples Area Intergroup

1509-B Pine Ridge Road
Naples, FL 34109
(50%)

District 20

District 20 Treasurer
P.O. Box 2896
Naples, FL 34106
(10%)

General Service Office

James A. Farley Station
P. O. Box 2407
New York, N. Y. 10116
(New Address) (30%)

Area 15

Don H.
P.O. Box 311
Safety Harbor, FL 34695
(10%)

Disbursement of a Group's Funds

"After the group's basic needs are met, such as providing for rent, literature, refreshments, and insurance, the group can participate in the financial support of the Fellowship as a whole by sending money to various A.A. service entities: 1) their local Intergroup or Central Office, 2) Area 15 and District 20; and 3) the General Service Office in New York. Many groups provide financial support for their G.S.R.s attending service functions. These entities use contributions in a number of ways, always with the aim of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers. The A.A. Group Treasurer, F-96,

Service material prepared by the
General Service Office

GROUP*/MEETING CONTRIBUTIONS

The six digit number next to the meeting name is their unique AA Registration Number assigned by the General Service Office in New York. This number signifies they are a "Registered Group"...Those meetings listed without a six digit number are **NOT registered with G.S.O.** and therefore not a "Group" (by AA definition), but is a "meeting". **Please see A.A. pamphlet: "The A.A. Group...where it all begins" P-16*

<u>Group/Meeting</u>	<u>APR23</u>	<u>YTD23</u>
11th Step Prayer & Meditation	60	60
Beach Bums	250	250
Big Book Comes Alive	0	145
Big Book Steppers, Bonita, 698101.....	53	201
Big Book Steppers, Naples, 654630.....	77	148
Bonita Banyan, 176463.....	189	282
Bonita Happy Hour, 670997.....	486	486
Bonita One Day At A Time	362	362
Bonita Saturday Night.....	253	523
Bonita Springs Morning, 678493.....	460	460
Bonita Unity	40	40
Brown Bag	924	924
Bonita Wed 11th Step.....	0	40
Common Solutions Naples	912	1,310
Daily Reflections ZOOM	90	334
Easy Does It, 156979.....	0	1,000
Gratitude Hour, 134223.....	0	69
Jaywalkers, 634271.....	183	183
Keep It Simple, 651598.....	340	726
Ladies Noon	75	75
Meeting In The Park.....	135	135
Men Of Naples, 634030.....	33	61
Monday Noon Daily Reflections	6	15
Morning Reflections, 660700.....	151	372
Naples Group	667	667
Naples Loving Sober	0	20
Naples South, 130210.....	199	199
New Dawn, 632504.....	0	418
Primary Purpose Marco	2,700	2,700

<u>Group/Meeting</u>	<u>APR23</u>	<u>YTD23</u>
Swamp Group, 672733	0	50
Tables Of Naples.....	0	30
Veranda.....	11	28
Wanderers, Ave Maria.....	0	35
We Care, Bonita, 617011.....	106	151
Where Are We	100	100

AA Groups/Meetings listed here are those which are either registered as a Group at the AA General Service Office in New York, or, have contributed financially to the Naples Area Intergroup.



The Birthday Club

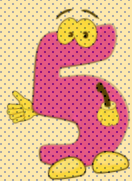
Did you know you can share your sobriety and gratitude in a practical way by joining the AA Birthday Club? Sign up today and be featured in the *Courier*. Show your support for your Central Office. A donation of only one dollar for every year of your sobriety will help carry the message to alcoholics who still suffer. Envelopes available at Central Office or from your Intergroup Representative.



Paul B.	50 years
Ron P.	50 years
Ron L.	42 years
Don M.	43 years
Jim B.	39 years
Dennis F.	35 years
Rad W.	35 years
Jackie T. F.	36 years
Judy W.	34 years
Steve K.	28 years
Peter F.	27 years
Eileen D.	22 years
Bill S.	20 years
Ken H.	20 years
Laura T. F.	4 years
Tina S	2 years



Faithful Fivers Needed



2023 Faithful Fiver Club

April O., Bill S., Eric S., James B., Jeanette H., Jim B., Jim H., Judy W., Kathryn Mc., Ken H., Ralph W., Ron L., Theresa R., Tim A.,

We are members of A.A. who want the hand of A.A. always to be there in the Naples, Florida area.

It's easy to join!

Use a Check or Credit Card to contribute monthly, or one time.

Stop by the Central Office for a one time Credit Card charge.

\$5.00 per month or \$60.00 per year!

Your membership directly supports 12-Step work in District 20 and the Central Office Operations.

District 20

(Collier County, the portion of Monroe County bordered by Collier and Miami-Dade Counties, and the portion of Hendry County below the northernmost boundary of Collier County.)

District 20 Officers:**Chair:**

Pete C., 784-7725
pete.curtner@yahoo.com

Alt. Chair:

Joe S., 845/554-8721
joeascaliala@icloud.com

Registrar:

Maria M., 370-2034
mmetchear@aol.com

Treasurer

George A., 276-4024
george.arminio1@gmail.com

Secretary:

Tom D., 206-6780
tomadavision@yahoo.com

Service Committees:**Archives**

Service Opportunity
Business meeting 3rd Saturday @ 24 Hour Club at 11am

Current Practices

Jerry E., 776-6767
jerryedleman@gmail.com

Grapevine

Andrea C., 908/347-0494
4chellana@gmail.com
Business meeting the third Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m., 24 Hour Club

Institutions

Joe S. 845/554-8721
joeascaliala@icloud.com
1st Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m., 24 Hour Club

Public Information/CPC

Service Opportunity
Business meeting the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m., 24 Hour Club

Technology

Dianna M., 248-6565
diannamusse@gmail.com

The Courier is published monthly by the *Naples Area Intergroup of Alcoholic Anonymous* with an office located at 1509-2 Pine Ridge Road, Naples, FL 34109-2198. This publication is by, for, and about the Fellowship of AA. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to AA as a whole, nor does publication of information imply any endorsement by either Alcoholics Anonymous or The *Naples Area Intergroup*. Quotations and artwork from AA literature are reprinted with permission from AA World Service, Inc., and/or The AA Grapevine, Inc..

Contributions from our readers are encouraged.

Submissions are edited for space and clarity only.

District 20**Business Meeting:**

Fourth Thursday of the Month, 7:00 pm
New Attitudes Club
4133 Tamiami Trail E.
(Lakewood & E 41)
Behind Speedway Gas

NAPLES AREA INTERGROUP MEETING

Central Office
1509-2 Pine Ridge Rd.
(next to 24 Hour Club)

SECOND Wednesday of each month at 7:00pm

Treatment Commitments**DAVID LAWRENCE CENTER**

Every day except Wednesday
7:00 p.m.
Maria M., 370-2034
mmetchear@aol.com

WILLOUGH

Sunday, Monday and Thursday
7:30pm
George A., 276-4024
george.arminio1@gmail.com

HAZELDEN

Monday, 7:00pm
Tom H., 777-1430
tomhigh@me.com

BRIDGING THE GAP

Maria M.
370-2034
mmetchear@aol.com

Area 15; Panel 69

(South Florida, Bahamas, US and British Virgin Islands, Antigua, St. Maarten, and Cayman Islands)

Delegate: Cary W
delegate@area15aa.org

Alternate: Lisa D.
altdelegate@area15aa.org

Chair: Donna W.
chair@area15aa.org

Treasurer: Karen V.
PO Box 590835
Ft Lauderdale, FL
33359-0835
treasurer@area15aa.org

Registrar: Robin P.
registrar@area15aa.org

Secretary: Bronwyn F.
secretary@area15aa.org

Naples Area Intergroup**Trusted Servants****Chair:**

Robert C. 784-8514
bcrowe616@aol.com

Vice Chair:

Service Opportunity

Treasurer:

Spence G., 207-7534
spenceg123@gmail.com

Secretary:

Tiana B. 337/283-1208
tsbrancato@gmail.com

Members at Large:

Tim A., 571-5440
timallencmb@gmail.com
Service Opportunity

Office Manager:

Ken Helton
1509-2 Pine Ridge Road
Naples, Florida 34109-2198
naplesintergroup@yahoo.com
Phone: 239-262-6535
www.aanaples.org

Office Hours:

Monday 9am to 4pm
Tuesday 9am to 4pm
Wednesday 9am to 4pm
Thursday 9am to 4pm
Friday 9am to 4pm
Saturday 9am to 4pm
Sunday CLOSED

Office Volunteers

Bill C., Bill D., Bill S.
Bonnie B., Carrie W.,
Chrissie F., Eric S., Faye B.,
Gay S., Joe B., Nikki E.,
Peggy E., Rob O., Tina S. ...
and loyal substitutes.
Service Opportunity

After-Hours Phone Volunteers

Geoff E., Heather B., Ken H.
Lauren F., Libby S., Nancy C.,
Steve K. and Tim A.
Service Opportunity