

THE COURIER

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How I Compiled Step Eight Honestly

The Big Book infers that we are to take stock honestly (p 64). My sponsor took this direction seriously with me because I had almost slipped after five months sober. I was informed that my mind was not always honest and that I must appeal God for help while writing my [Step Eight inventory](#).

I was reminded that Bill Wilson wrote about the "...Great Reality deep down within us." (p 55). This would be my source to find the unvarnished truth, rather than my deceitful alcoholic thinking which led me to the bar room, year after year.

So, I prayed to God repeatedly—like a mantra. As I wrote, with God's help, there appeared ever so many memories of people I had harmed. These included having my name appearing in the local newspaper, over and over, for public intoxication which had to embarrass my wonderful Christian parents. Also, my younger sister when she entered high school because of the dismal reputation I left behind. I went on a two-week drinking binge during my senior year!

Reviewing this process, I began to realize how dishonest with myself I had been through all those drunken years. It is easy to suppress unpleasant memories, thus avoiding the accompanying guilt. Of course, [without guilt](#), nothing changes!

I will be forever grateful to my sponsor for his direction and Big Book knowledge on this step. We are told not to regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it (p 83). I am still susceptible to guilt feelings to a certain degree, but not overwhelmingly. I have done what I can to make things right. Also, we are told about amends we cannot make: "We don't worry about them if we can honestly say we would right them is we could."

By Bob S.

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.)



AUGUST ... The Eighth (8th) Month Of Alcoholics Anonymous

The EIGHTH MONTH of Alcoholics Anonymous

STEP EIGHT: “Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.”

TRADITION EIGHT: “Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional,

CONCEPT EIGHT: “The Trustees of the General Service Board act in two primary capacities: (a) ...for policy and finance, they are the principle planners and administrators. ...(b)...incorporated and constantly active service, the relation of the Trustees is mainly that of full stock ownership and of custodial; oversight which they exercise through their ability to elect all directors of these entities.”

8th Step Prayer: “Higher Power, I ask Your help in making my list of all those I have harmed. I will take responsibility for my mistakes and Be forgiving to others as You are forgiving to me. Grant me the willingness to begin my restitution. This I pray.”

TRADITIONS—CHECKLIST

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

1. Is my own behavior accurately described by the Traditions? If not, what needs changing?
2. When I chafe about any particular Tradition, do I realize how it affects others?
3. Do I sometimes try to get some reward - even if not money - for my personal AA efforts?
4. Do I try to sound in AA like an expert on alcoholism? On recovery? On medicine? On sociology? On AA itself?. On psychology? On spiritual matters? Or, heaven help me, even on humility?
5. Do I make an effort to understand what AA employees do? What workers in other alcoholism agencies do? Can I distinguish clearly among them?
6. In my own AA life, have I any experiences which illustrate the wisdom of this Tradition?
7. Have I paid enough attention to the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions? To the pamphlet AA Tradition – How It Developed?

The 2026 GRATITUDE DINNER TICKETS will go on sale Thursday, September 10th at the INTERGROUP OFFICE and by each of your GROUP INTERGROUP REPRESENTATIVEs.

COME FOR THE GRATITUDE.
STAY FOR THE FELLOWSHIP!

The Naples Area Intergroup

239/262-6535

GRATITUDE Dinner

AN EVENING OF GRATITUDE,
FELLOWSHIP & CELEBRATION

SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 7, 2026

TICKET PRICE

\$40

CASH / CHECK

Payable to
NAPLES INTERGROUP
see your Intergroup
Representative



WELCOME RECEPTION 6:15PM



DINING ROOM DOORS OPEN 6:45PM



DINNER BEGINS 7:00PM

➤ *Come Join Us!* ➤

New Hope Ministries

7675 Davis Blvd.
Naples, FL 34104

GRATEFUL
CONNECTED
TOGETHER

*credit card payments accepted in person at Intergroup Office
(office hours Mon.-Sat. 9AM to 4PM)

Thankful



Sister Mary Ignatia (1889-1966)

Born Della Mary Gavin in 1889 in Ireland, Sister Ignatia worked with Dr. Bob to help admit alcoholics into St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, Ohio, starting in 1939. She surmounted obstacles to personally care for thousands of alcoholics over the next several decades, both in Akron and later at St. Vincent Charity Hospital in Cleveland. Beloved by all who were associated with or helped by her, she was commonly referred to as the “Angel of Alcoholics Anonymous.”

Originally a musician, Sister Ignatia was transferred by her order, the Sisters of Charity of Saint Augustine, to St. Thomas Hospital in Akron to work in their admissions office. It was in that capacity that she first met and worked with Dr. Bob. In an interview with Bill W., Sister regaled the co-founder with cherished recollections of Dr. Bob and their work with drunks at St. Thomas:

“Dr. Bob was the essence of professional dignity. He had a fine sense of humor and exceptional vocabulary.... Now, as I look back over the years, I realize that Dr. Bob was slowly but surely preparing me for the great project he had in mind. We often discussed the problem of alcoholism and the tragedies caused by excessive drinking. The individual given to alcoholic addiction is frequently a wreck of humanity – broken in body and soul, and heart and unable to help himself. His loved ones suffer, too; there were many broken homes and hearts because of compulsive drinking.” (Recording of Sister Ignatia, 1954)

Her work in helping alcoholics was done with much dignity and modest distinction. In December 1949, she was presented with the Poverello Medal of the College of Steubenville. The medal was given to her for the A.A. Fellowship for her untiring efforts with alcoholics in Akron. In March 1961, Sister Ignatia received a letter of acknowledgment for her pioneering contributions from the White House (President Kennedy), which she shared with Bill W.

[Sister Mary Ignatia ... continued on page 5.](#)

[Sister Mary Ignatia ... contined from page 4.](#)

The letter read:

Dear Sister Mary Ignatia:

Through an admirer of yours, the President has learned of the fine work you have done in the past at St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, and, more recently, at St. Vincent's in Cleveland. He has been informed that a large number of citizens have been restored to useful citizenship as a result of your efforts. As you have been a strong influence for the good to many people, you have added strength to your community and nation.

In response to receiving a copy of the President's letter, Bill responded to Sister Ignatia:

We have read the marvelous letter which President Kennedy requested be sent to you. It reminds me that I have no words to tell of my devotion and my gratitude to you, of the constant inspiration you have given me and so many over the years by your example of the finest in all that is spiritual and eternal, as well as temporal.

Following Dr. Bob's death in 1950, Sister Ignatia continued her work at St. Thomas. Then in 1952, she was transferred to St. Vincent Charity Hospital at Cleveland, where she was placed in charge of its alcoholic ward. Upon arrival, the ward at "Charity" was part of a dilapidated wing and was in great need of rejuvenation. Through the Sister's urging and much assistance from A.A. members with carpentry skills, the ward was soon transformed and named Rosary Hall Solarium.

Sister Ignatia provided each patient who left her care with a Sacred Heart badge. Receiving this item was accompanied by a personal promise to the Sister that the patient would return the badge before they drank again.

* * * * *

**"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



“AA has taught me that I’m the architect of my own success or happiness. The quality of my sobriety is up to me – it will be what I want it to be.”

**Keego Harbor, Mich., June 1998,
From: “Paradoxes of Sobriety”,
Beginner’s Book**

BEGINNERS’ BOOK

Getting and Staying Sober in AA

“We have, in AA, no coercive human authority. Because each AA, of necessity, has a sensitive and responsive conscience, and because alcohol will discipline him severely if he backslides, we are finding we have little need for manmade rules or regulations.”

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., January 1948, From: “Tradition Two”, The Language of the Heart



THE LANGUAGE OF THE HEART

**Bill W.’s
Grapevine Writings**

I Want To Drink So Bad My Hair Hurts

For my first few months of one-day-at-a-time sobriety in AA, I suffered from a truly horrendous desire for alcohol. I didn't drink, but I had a fierce craving that never slept until I slept. One night at a meeting, sharing this desperate situation with my chums, I tried to find a form of expression that matched the enormity—the real outlandishness—of my abominable craving. And I found it. "I want to drink so bad my hair hurts!" Everyone in the room laughed, and so did I. From that moment the craving, although it did not disappear completely for several months, was more bearable and less frightening. I had laughed at it, and that made me stronger than it was.

Again and again in my sober years in AA, I've run across the power of humor, or a deft, unexpected turn of phrase, to cast a bright new light that suddenly makes a problem look different. Many of us sigh regretfully at the sad prospect of giving up alcohol. Norman and Willis, speaking at meetings separated by several weeks, handily knocked that nonsense out of me. "Ah, the joys of alcohol, how well we remember!" Norman told an open meeting audience. "We remember the soft lights, the music of ice cubes against glass, the enticing flavor and aroma of our delicious beverage...and we forget who threw up in whose lap." At another open meeting a few weeks later, Willis delivered the finishing touch to any lingering regret I might ever feel about parting from alcohol. "How could I possibly give up drinking?" Willis demanded of his audience. "I couldn't give it up and I didn't." The audience began exhibiting symptoms of shock. "Give up drinking? Give up guilt and shame and fear and bitter remorse and self-hatred? Give up constant sickness and living under the threat of death or imprisonment? You don't 'give up' garbage. You throw it away!"

However firm my conviction that removing alcohol from my life deprived me of nothing worth keeping, the fact still remained that sometimes I felt a bit pensive when others were drinking and I was not. Surely not because I thought it was unfair? I learned that life is unfair about the same time I learned the multiplication table, and a lot better. So I didn't expect life to be fair, or for me to be able to drink along with those nonalcoholic jerks—oops! I mean those charming ladies and gentlemen who can drink without getting drunk, a feat totally beyond me. One evening when I was somewhat sourly sipping my undiluted club soda and wondering if bourbon was still as delicious as I remembered from my last taste of it, eight years before, an unexpected voice murmured in my ear: "This could lead to self-pity if we let it." It was Al, a fellow AA member I had come to know and like in service work. Apparently it was his night to read minds, for he added, "I used to think it was unfair that other people could drink and I couldn't." "And now you don't think it is?" "Not since the night I got to figuring out how much alcohol I consumed before AA. I drank more than any of those socially drinking chaps would in their lifetimes, probably more than the bunch of them put together. No, you certainly can't say that not drinking me is depriving me of anything I'm entitled to. I've had my share." "I never looked at it that way before," I laughed.

"Now that you mention it, I've had my share, too. And several other people's." That night the resentment I still had about not being able to drink with the crowd linked arms with Al's old resentment, and they staggered away together, into the past, where they belonged. If it ever shows signs of reappearing, the thought, "I've had my share!" sends it scurrying off again. I can recall visiting an open meeting where a new member was giving her first AA talk. We heard a great deal more than we either needed or wanted to hear about the upheavals in her personal life just prior to AA. We would have preferred not hearing that there was a question about the paternity of her young child—and felt reasonably sure the woman's husband and young child also would have preferred our not hearing it. Clearly it is the duty of AA women with several years of sobriety to inform these confused young women that "program of honesty" does not mean revealing the most intimate details of your life to a roomful of strangers.

Some things should be discussed only with a sponsor or when taking the Fifth Step. Now I try to carry this message, too: "You have no obligation to tell the group anything about yourself that you might regret telling later, and a responsibility not to tell anything that could hurt or embarrass someone else. Remember..." And here, laughter comes to my aid again, and I hand them the comment I heard from a witty elderly woman at a tea many years ago. The conversation had turned to a new book by a female celebrity who gave a bed-by-bed account of all the players. Asked why she didn't like the book, Mrs. X replied crisply, "If a woman isn't going to be a lady, she ought to be a gentleman!" My little lectures on early-day discretion always end with Mrs. X's pungent remark. Without fail my new friends give me hope that they may be ready to stop drinking and start living. They laugh.

Love Empathy and Compassion

No Criticism or Character Assassination

By Rick R.

San Diego, California

Hanging on to resentments and criticizing the behavior of others is often a noticeable characteristic of some members of the program that never find the serenity and peace that is mentioned in the promises. For some people it seems impossible to let their guard down. I think that most of us can understand this, simply because we have all had to face this issue and deal with it as we went through the Twelve Step process. One of the things that I learned when I was faced with this matter was that I had a *self-esteem issue* and I overcorrected, by pointing the faults of others, to somehow make myself seem normal. This never worked for me as I could not fool my *conscience*. Things only got worse. I still worked through the steps and did what I could at the time. No one gets it perfect the first time, but we can make a second effort at it when we have established a record of living by principles. Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) meetings are a training ground for how we treat others and if we cannot accept the people there, it is a cinch we will not do it outside of the rooms.

Everyone that comes to A.A. brings with them, their own assortment of mental, emotional, spiritual, and material problems, and none of us are without these concerns. If we did not have them, we would not need this program. We all feel vulnerable and establish our own firewalls, with the help of our EGO'S, to protect ourselves from our perception of what those other people are doing, saying, and thinking. We each might establish hard and fast protective reactions, mentally and verbally to protect our own turf. With so many different personalities brought together in one group, it is extremely hard to let down our guards we all feel justified when pointing out the faults of others. This is what the alcoholic personality does.

With the understanding that *most forms of criticism and character assassination stem from low self-esteem*, it occurred to me that I was just as guilty of the very things that I was accusing them of. I likened it to two old men in a convalescent home hitting each other with their canes because one was not walking fast enough for the other. I had to step up to the plate and become strong enough to *look deeper into their motives and understand what caused them to behave the way they did, and not be threatened by their outside behavior*. I cannot express in words the mental freedom that this principle has produced in me. When I see someone acting out, my first thought is *not judgmental in nature but of empathy and compassion*. My next thought is "what I can do to help him or her." In time, I have come to terms with all the people that I inner act with on a day-to-day basis and I conflict with no one. To me, *they are all like kids just learning how to do life*. They all have problems, and I am not going to be one of their problems. I need to be strong enough to replaced words like *resentment, judgment, and criticism* with *empathy, understanding and compassion*. Today I have no adversaries that I can think of, and *peace of mind is the natural result of this approach*.

I find no exceptions to this principle, and I cannot be selective about who I apply it to. Everyone gets amnesty in my book. All those mental gymnastics about "those other people" are a distant memory and I cannot think of a single time that practicing this principle did not serve me well. The only one that is sorry for this profound and life changing transition is my EGO, but about that; who am I to criticize?



SPIRITUAL AWAKENINGS

Journeys of the Spirit

“These days I find that nothing is as precious as my sanity. I used to be addicted to drama and could only function on excitement and high levels of adrenaline. It’s very different today ... It’s all very ordinary and average and sane, and I wouldn’t trade it for anything”

**London, England, February 1997,
From: “Mesmerized by Sanity”, Spir-
itual Awakenings**

“The Twelve Steps are not steps to take progressively in order to arrive at a conclusion, but a code for living -- the constitution of a way of life.”

**Alva, Okla., January 1952, From:
“Spirituality”, AA Grapevine**





What Can a Central Office Do For Me?

First, what is an Intergroup or a Central Office?

A central or intergroup office, (e.g. AA Cleveland District Office) is a service office of Alcoholics Anonymous that involves partnership among groups in a community — just as AA groups themselves are partnerships of individuals.

A central/intergroup office is established to carry out certain functions common to all of the groups — functions which are best handled by a centralized office — usually maintained, supervised and supported by these groups in their general interest. It exists to aid the groups in their common purpose of carrying the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

There are nearly 700 central/intergroup offices throughout the world performing vital AA services. These constitute a network of service outlets and contacts to help carry the AA message.

An Intergroup / Central Office can:

- Put you in direct contact with Alcoholics Anonymous in just about any area throughout the United States and abroad.
- Answer inquiries from those seeking help.
- Refer you to a nearby group — where sponsorship or contact through a Twelfth Step call may be arranged.
- Maintain a conveniently located office in which paid workers and/or volunteers coordinate local AA services.
- Publish and distribute up-to-date lists of meetings and other information about local AA services.
- Sell AA Conference-approved literature and other spiritual/recovery related materials.
- Circulate and exchange information among all the AA groups in the community.
- Provide “exchange” meetings, where group program chairpersons gather regularly to exchange meetings with other groups.
- Be an ideal contact with those in the community seeking information about AA.
- Maintain contact with local groups in correctional facilities and treatment facilities, offering literature and prerelease AA contacts and arranging for AA speakers and visitors to meetings.
- Be a logical body to manage the details of an annual dinner, picnic, or convention, if the participating groups wish it.
- Publish a periodic distribution to AA groups in the form of a monthly newsletter.
- Carry information about wheelchair accessible meetings or those that provide American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation for members who are deaf.

By AA Guidelines – Central or Intergroup Offices



Children of Alcoholics

Every so often we hear someone at a meeting sharing that he or she came from a very loving and caring family but they still developed into full blown alcoholics like the rest of us. I've heard people suggesting that it's in our genes. I've also heard people share bitterness toward their parents for the way they turned out because their parents were alcoholics too. This only makes me want to look deeper for answers as to what can be done to give our kids the best possible shot at turning out to be normal, well adjusted adults.

When I look back at the family environment that I grew up in it's easy to see that my chances of being normal were pretty slim and I could probably blame them for the problems that ensued, but then who do they get to blame for how they evolved into alcoholics themselves. Then, wouldn't that give my son the right to blame me for his problems. Parenting seldom works well for alcoholics, so what can be done about it.

Being a sober grandfather has given me the opportunity to get a second chance to influence the development of a child from birth to young adulthood and I got the chance to experience how difficult it is for young parents, alcoholic or not, with all of the issues young people have to deal with and how overwhelming it can be, with no previous experience, so it's not surprising that they repeat what their parents did while raising children.

One of the most important things that children need is to feel safe and secure and not feel threatened. If you've ever seen a child when he first pulls himself to his feet and starts getting curious about the knickknacks on the coffee table and attempts to pick one up, when an adult jumps up, runs over to him shouting "NO, PUT THAT DOWN" and tries to pull it out of his hand. He resists and pulls back and gets his wrist slapped. This may be the seed that spawns the tree of defiance. If, however the parent were prepared for this event and before he pulled himself up to the coffee table, they removed things that could be damaged and replaced them with things that were safe, and even put some of the child's toys in the mix. Now, what typically happens is: He picks it up, shakes it little then looks at you to see your reaction, you smile at him, he shakes it again, and looks at you again, you smile again, and he then lays it down and starts to look for the next great coffee table adventure. His brain is exploring life for the first time and he is collecting data for future references.

Kids are resilient but they are also very vulnerable in their formative years and if they develop in an environment where they must protect themselves, it often sidetracks them from the mental freedom that results from being raised in safe and trusting surroundings. Alcoholics with children in the grammar school age level, when introduced to the program sometimes think that they must sit down and disclose, to their children, all the things that they are going through in the program, and I think that this can be a big mistake. When the alcoholic's problems are introduced to these developing little minds it often causes issues that they are not developed enough to assimilate into their normal mental development. If they are introduced to all of these adult behavioral issues, it can be very confusing and they can be distracted from the natural mental growth process. These things might better be postponed until the alcoholic has put a few years between him and his troubled past, when the child can only see no threat from those old memories.

A child masters a language from scratch in their first five years along with interacting with others. They begin to learn right from wrong and many other facets of mental development. If the parents focus on the importance of giving them a free path to evolving in a healthy environment the child has a much better chance to grow into a health adult. It may be the best chance of breaking the cycle of alcoholism in the next generation of offspring in the family tree. I would consider rethinking my parenting skills in the wake of my alcoholic thinking. Take it from a very Sober, Grateful Grand-pa.

Rick R., San Diego California

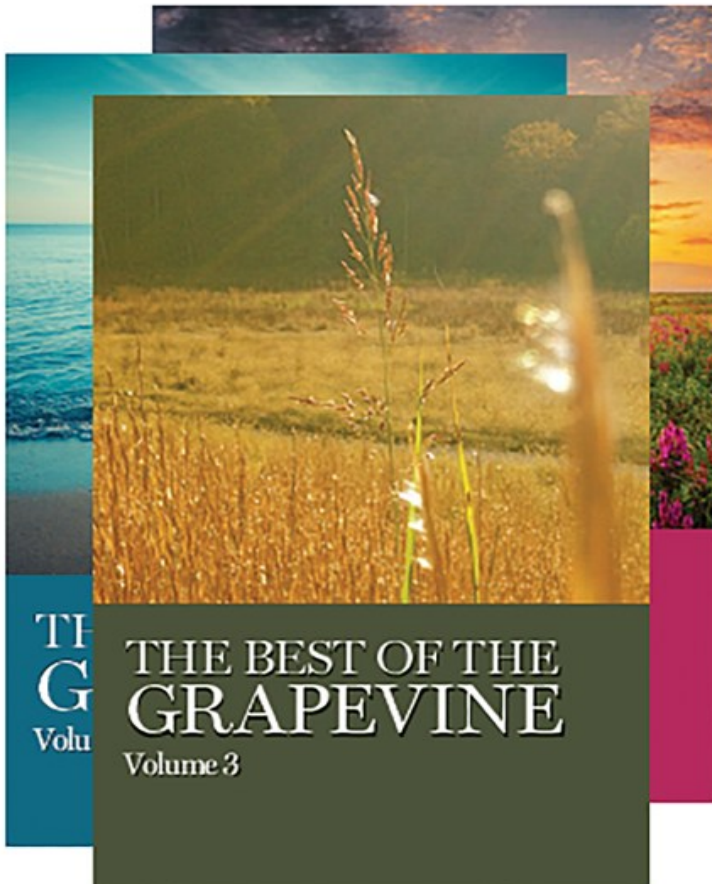
“A while ago a speaker said that it was no use admitting that one was an alcoholic unless the admittance was accompanied by a realization of what being an alcoholic really meant ... He said there was no use my making the admission even in the full realization of what it meant, unless I accepted the fact that I was an alcoholic without resentment.”

**Toronto, Ontario, November 1952,
“I Had Lost the War!”, Step By Step**



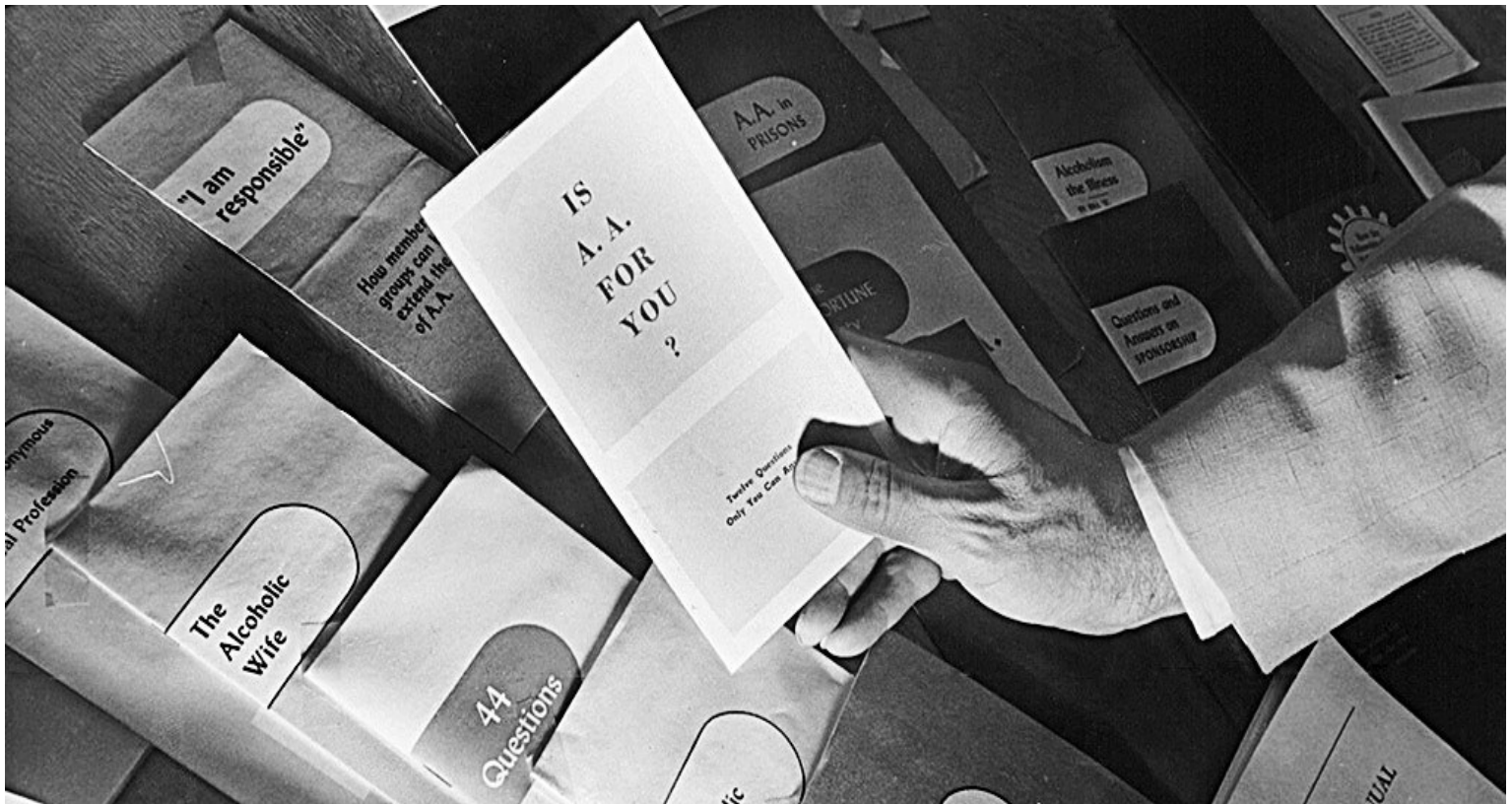
STEP BY STEP

Real AAs, Real Recovery



“As drinking alcoholics, we all ran from life and toward death. When we join AA, we reverse the process – we give ourselves to life as it is, rather than as we would like it to be.”

Key West, Fla., February 1973, “Self-Pity Can Kill”, Best of Grapevine, Volume 3



AA's Beginning – Time to Do Outreach Again

A.A. began in 1935 in Akron, Ohio, as the outcome of a meeting between Bill W., a New York stockbroker, and Dr. Bob S., an Akron surgeon. Both had been hopeless alcoholics.

Bill emphasized that alcoholism was a malady of mind, emotions, and body. Bill learned this important fact from Dr. William D. Silkworth of Towns Hospital in New York. Bill had often been a patient of Dr. Silkworth. Though a physician, Dr. Bob had not known alcoholism to be a disease. Responding to Bill's convincing ideas, Dr. Bob soon got sober, never to drink again. This sparked the founding of A.A.

Both men immediately set to work with alcoholics at Akron's City Hospital. One patient quickly achieved complete sobriety. These three men made up the nucleus of the first A.A. group.

Cooperation with the professional community has been an objective of Alcoholics Anonymous from its very beginnings. Over the years Alcoholics Anonymous has not been as favored by the medical community as it once was. MAT (Medical Assisted Treatment) has not viewed A.A. as complimentary. COVID also shut down our ability to go into hospitals and treatment centers.

The Cleveland District Office has been reaching out to hospitals and treatment centers to let them know we have no opinion on outside issues and we are available to help the alcoholic who still suffers. We will be forming a Committee in the near future and will ask our members to help us go back to our roots in the hospitals to continue our primary purpose to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

**Predatory behaviors
and unwanted sexual advances
are in conflict with
carrying the A.A. message
of recovery and with A.A. principles.**

— Safety Card for A.A. Groups

One Member's View on the "13th Step"

The "13th step" is an A.A. term used to describe behavior that some members see as inconsistent with the spirit of helping a newcomer. Here are a few points to consider before "dating" the new person.

- Creates an imbalance of power
- Takes advantage of vulnerability
- Confuses support with romance or intimacy
- Reinforces dependency
- Can damage trust
- May increase shame and isolation
- Blur boundaries
- Feeling unsafe in the rooms of AA

Some AA members believe that it is no big deal to "date" a new person. New sobriety is a fragile time when that person is at their lowest. Some of us may have experienced emotional or physical abuse in past relationships. The newcomer is lost, just like we were. New people look to us for guidance in these early days. We are their shields until they are further along in sobriety.

Most sponsors help new comers realize the pitfalls of early sobriety, as well as guide them through the steps. Not everyone in AA is a safe person. Most of us don't even know who we are when we get here. This is the time to focus on staying sober and getting the tools we need to build a solid [spiritual foundation](#). We will be there for you when you want to throw in the towel and laugh with you when times are good. Alone I will drink, together we stay sober.

Most relationships based on physical attraction, co-dependency, or control don't last. What happens to the new person when the relationship ends? The new person is left to deal with overwhelming emotions, people taking sides and gossip flourishing. The meetings that they once went to as a couple no longer feel safe and thoughts of drinking return. Feeling unwelcome at an AA meeting is not something a new person should have to experience. This can and does happen within the AA community. I have had this happen to me. I stayed sober with the help of my sponsor, and a strong support group. That is not always the case. So, it seems to me that "dating" a newcomer is a big deal, at least it was for me.

Bobbi P., Alcoholics Anonymous Cleveland



“It’s important to monitor my thinking, to be conscious of what thoughts I’m hugging to my heart, inviting to stay in my mind, encouraging to hang around my head.”

**Chestertown, N.Y., January 2006,
From: “Circles of Sobriety”, Beginner’s Book**

BEGINNERS’ BOOK

Getting and Staying Sober in AA

“The beginning of maturing for me was becoming willing to try to face the realities of my own life, a day at a time, and letting go of my childhood fantasies of living happily ever after in a perfect world made up of perfect people.”

**New York, N.Y., April 1980, From:
“Toward Reality”, Spiritual Awakenings**



SPIRITUAL AWAKENINGS

Journeys of the Spirit

An Education in the Art of Living

Sharing our Experience, Strength, and Hope

By Rick R., San Diego, California

For the newcomer, the first 164 pages of the Big Book contain the framework of how to overcome the disaster of a life consumed by Alcoholism. As I drank myself into the corner of life and ran out of options, I desperately searched for answer, and something told me to try Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). And, there I found People who had overcome most of the troubling issues of life.

Each chapter in the Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous) has a certain subject, and they try to explain specific areas of our lives where we could improve our thoughts and behaviors. It seems that if we did what they suggested in those 164 pages everything would be fine with us alcoholics; but wait! Next, they published The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (12&12) to give more amplifying information as to how to incorporate the steps into our daily lives. As I continued to progress in the program it caused me to seek a vastly more serious understanding of the depth of this disease and how serious my symptoms were.

The first 164 pages just scratched the surface, but they gave me a challenge as to what degree of commitment I would pursue as I began to uncover defect after defect in a Thousand Facets of my sick mentality. Fear, insecurity, and my EGO dogged my every step and as I become strong enough to overcome my Ego driven approach to these issues, my CONSCIENCE started getting a foothold; and, it motivated me to dig deeper yet and pursue a life based on unselfish Principles and to abandon the faulty thinking of the past.

As I continued to grow, I had to come to terms with the understanding of a POWER GREATER THAN MYSELF and I was encouraged to read a book by Emmet Fox entitled "The Sermon on the Mount" considered to be the inspiration that the founders of the A A program incorporated into the SPIRITUAL SOLUTION to the doubters like me. It removed all those doubts.

Next, I had to learn how to become a good Husband, Father, Friend, Coworker, and so on. As we shared our experiences with each other we are in the state of learning how to solve those THOUSAND FACETS of our sick mentality. My wife came home from an AI Anon meeting, in my early years of sobriety, all excited about the topic of "Examining our Motives. That one little statement changed my entire way of thinking about my behavioral problems. SELFISHNESS---Self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. (BB pg.62) If selfishness is the root, (motive) then unselfishness is the obvious solution. That simple understanding set, in place, a habit of living by unselfish motives. And, as a result, I am not ashamed of anything I do today. I have a clear conscience; and, it is so much easier than I thought it would be. It does not say generous, it just says unselfish. DUH!

The world is full of supporting information concerning all the facets of the different mental troubles the alcoholic is faced with when seeking answers. When we use the word: LOVE, I thought it was a feeling. But, I found a version of Love in a book by Scott Peck's, The Road less Traveled that defines Love as: Caring for and Nurturing another Person's Soul. It is an *action* word; and, I can Love everyone even if they do not love me back, by wanting the best for them and offering my help. Using these examples is my way of encouraging everyone who finds it difficult to experience the quiet satisfaction that they expect to receive from the program ... to find the answers by looking deeper into the subject and seek out the answers that help you to set in place those unselfish Principles and Habits which lead to, as an old friend refers to as: Peace of Mind and a Quiet Heart.

I Stand By The Door

By Sam Shoemaker (from the Oxford Group)

I stand by the door.
I neither go to far in, nor stay to far out.
The door is the most important door in the world -
It is the door through which men walk when they find God.
There is no use my going way inside and staying there,
When so many are still outside and they, as much as I,
Crave to know where the door is.
And all that so many ever find
Is only the wall where the door ought to be.
They creep along the wall like blind men,
With outstretched, groping hands,
Feeling for a door, knowing there must be a door,
Yet they never find it.
So I stand by the door.

The most tremendous thing in the world
Is for men to find that door - the door to God.
The most important thing that any man can do
Is to take hold of one of those blind, groping hands
And put it on the latch - the latch that only clicks
And opens to the man's own touch.

Men die outside the door, as starving beggars die
On cold nights in cruel cities in the dead of winter.
Die for want of what is within their grasp.
They live on the other side of it - live because they have not found it.

Nothing else matters compared to helping them find it,
And open it, and walk in, and find Him.
So I stand by the door.

Go in great saints; go all the way in -
Go way down into the cavernous cellars,
And way up into the spacious attics.
It is a vast, roomy house, this house where God is.
Go into the deepest of hidden casements,
Of withdrawal, of silence, of sainthood.
Some must inhabit those inner rooms
And know the depths and heights of God,
And call outside to the rest of us how wonderful it is.
Sometimes I take a deeper look in.



Interior St. Paul Episcopal Church
Fr. Silkwood's church, 1952—1962
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Continued on page 18.

I Stand By The Door ... continue from page 8.

Sometimes I venture in a little farther,
But my place seems closer to the opening.
So I stand by the door.

There is another reason why I stand there.
Some people get part way in and become afraid
Lest God and the zeal of His house devour them;
For God is so very great and asks all of us.
And these people feel a cosmic claustrophobia
And want to get out. 'Let me out!' they cry.
And the people way inside only terrify them more.
Somebody must be by the door to tell them that they are spoiled.
For the old life, they have seen too much:
One taste of God and nothing but God will do any more.
Somebody must be watching for the frightened
Who seek to sneak out just where they came in,
To tell them how much better it is inside.
The people too far in do not see how near these are
To leaving - preoccupied with the wonder of it all.
Somebody must watch for those who have entered the door
But would like to run away. So for them too,
I stand by the door.

I admire the people who go way in.
But I wish they would not forget how it was
Before they got in. Then they would be able to help
The people who have not yet even found the door.
Or the people who want to run away again from God.
You can go in too deeply and stay in too long
And forget the people outside the door.
As for me, I shall take my old accustomed place,
Near enough to God to hear Him and know He is there,
But not so far from men as not to hear them,
And remember they are there too.

Where? Outside the door -
Thousands of them. Millions of them.
But - more important for me -
One of them, two of them, ten of them.
Whose hands I am intended to put on the latch.
So I shall stand by the door and wait
For those who seek it:

**'I had rather be a door-keeper
So I stand by the door.**

**Door to St Paul Episcopal Church
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**



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

**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



SERENITY CLUB OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

— ANNUAL — GOLF OUTING & LUNCHEON FUNDRAISER

Support Recovery. Change Lives.

Proceeds benefit the Serenity Club of Southwest Florida,
a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.



NAPLES, FLORIDA

SUNDAY, AUGUST 30, 2026

BEAR'S PAW COUNTRY CLUB • NAPLES, FLORIDA

EVENT SCHEDULE



7:00 AM
Registration
& Check-In



8:00 AM
Shotgun Start



1:30 PM
Lunch, Awards
& Fellowship

REGISTRATION

\$150.00 PER GOLFER

INCLUDES:

- ✓ Golf
- ✓ Cart
- ✓ Lunch
- ✓ Awards
- ✓ Fellowship
- ✓ Prizes



*Become a
Sponsor.
Change a Life.*

SCAN TO VIEW
TOURNAMENT RULES



YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE



GREAT GOLF
Enjoy a premier
golf experience.



GOOD FOOD
Lunch, awards &
fellowship.



GREAT FELLOWSHIP
Connect with friends
old & new.



SUPPORT RECOVERY
Help carry the message
of hope.



YOUR SPONSORSHIP IS MORE THAN A SIGN ON A GOLF COURSE.

It helps provide a place where hope, recovery, and fellowship
are available to anyone seeking a better way of life.

100% OF SPONSORSHIP
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AUGUST 15, 2026

FOR SPONSORSHIP INFORMATION:
John Fisher 239-450-1044
Mike Belyea 239-777-4812
www.serenityclubswfl.org



All proceeds benefit the Serenity Club of Southwest Florida, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to providing recovery, hope, and fellowship within our community.



Scan to learn
more about
the Serenity Club
of SWFL.

THE 66TH ICYPAA in MICHIGAN

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

ON AWAKENING

September
3rd - 6th



Register now
& book your room!

Amway Grand Plaza Hotel
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ICYPAA.ORG



Serenity By The Sea!



SEPTEMBER 11 - 13, 2026

*A Weekend of Food, Fun & Fellowship Featuring
Meetings, Workshops, Speakers, and a Saturday Night Banquet!*

BOB D.

Las Vegas, NV

STEPHANIE B.

Konawa, OK

JIMMY D.

Dallas, TX

LAURA B.

Austin, TX

BILLY N.

West Palm, FL

Dynamic Talks from around the United States



A VARIETY OF SPECIAL EVENTS!

(Badges must be worn to attend all meetings & workshops)

~ Workshops! ~ Archives! ~ Speakers

The rest will be a Surprise!

Sunrise/Early Bird and Sunset/Night Owl Meetings!

HOTEL REGISTRATION INFORMATION

The Naples Hilton Resort!

1-800-445-8667

Please visit *our website for*
additional information and one-click booking!

\$140 Per Night Single or Double Occupancy
(Free Self-Parking, Wi-Fi, & No Daily Resort Fees!)

GROUP Name Serenity By The Sea 2026
Group Code: SBTS26

For more information visit www.serenityclubswfl.org/

(Reservations must be made as soon as possible, to receive this rate.)

If you need additional information, or have special needs, please call
John F. at 239-450-1044, email jfisheraa05@gmail.com, or write:
Serenity By The Sea, 12435 Collier Blvd. unit 107 Naples, FL 34116

Your Registration Includes:

Access To All Meetings And Workshops!

SERENITY BY THE SEA REGISTRATION

(Register online at www.serenityclubswfl.org)

\$60.00 Per Person

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

ZIP _____ PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

Name on Badges _____

Registration Fee (Required) **\$60.00**

Saturday Night Banquet (Optional) **\$65.00**

Guest Banquet **\$65.00**

TOTAL _____

Make Checks Payable To:
and Mail To:

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

This is a fundraiser. All sales are final. NO REFUNDS. Cancelled/unclaimed registrations will become scholarships.

FINANCES**Jul 26****YTD 26****Income**

Literature/Merchandise \$4,481 \$32,372

Group Contributions 1,958 \$20,675

AA Birthdays 40

Faithful Five 120

Individual/Anonymous 589 1,203

Total Income 7,028 54,498**Expenses**

Bank/Credit Card Fees 115 690

Licenses/Permits - 70

Office Supplies 598 3,325

Office Improve/Repair -

www Hosting - 270

Payroll 2,425 14,550

Payroll Tax -

Postage - 34

Printing - 2,434

Purchases/Lit./Merch. 1,742 20,602

Insurance -

Rent 500 3,500

Sales Tax 178 2,091

Telephone/www 241 1,854

Utilities 100 700

Computer Equipment - -

Computer Software 285 844

Licenses / Memberships - 270

Accounting Services - 1,544

Total Expenses 6,352 55,638**Net Ordinary Income** \$676 (\$1,140)

Gratitude Dinner Tickets -

Raffle Ticket Sales

Gratitude Expenses -

NET OTHER INCOME -**NET INCOME** \$676 (\$1,140)

**Thank you to all who contribute 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%)

General Service Office

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

District 20

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

Area 15

Area 15 Treasurer
2950 W. Cypress Creek Rd.
Ste 333 #1097
Ft Lauderdale, FL 33309
New Address (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>July 26</u>	<u>YTD26</u>
Group #510367.....	0.....	321
Group #1092618.....	0.....	304
11th Step Prayer & Meditation Bonita	0.....	123
Beach Bums	0.....	700
Big Book Comes Alive	0.....	300
Big Book Steppers Bonita	0.....	60
Big Book Steppers Naples	0.....	210
Bonita Banyon.....	0.....	100
Bonita Friday Joe & Charlie	0.....	194
Bonita Springs 96395.....	381.....	724
Bonita Hapy Hour.....	0.....	247
Bonita Springs One Day At A Time	0.....	330
Bonita Springs Women's Meeting.....	0.....	200
Bonita Wednesday Beginners	250.....	250
Brown Bag Group	180.....	900
Cake Meeting	0.....	50
Common Solutions Naples.....	556.....	1,725
Daily Reflections ZOOM	0.....	230
Early Risers.....	0.....	500
Easy Does It	0.....	1,250
Friday Night Lights	0.....	600
Gratitude Hour	0.....	325
Happy Healers	0.....	535
Jaywalkers.....	0.....	51
Keep It Simple.....	182.....	503
Meeting In The Park	0.....	653
Men Of Naples	56.....	334
Monday Daily Reflections	14.....	102
Naples Group	0.....	800
Naples Men Big Book Study.....	0.....	99
Naples Nooners	0.....	795
New Attitude Group (1150040010).....	0.....	490
New Dawn.....	0.....	884
Nuts & Bolts.....	30.....	30
On Awakening	0.....	20

<u>Group/Meeting</u>	<u>July 26</u>	<u>YTD26</u>
Primary Purpose	0.....	3,500
SOS Meeting	0.....	50
Saturday Nite Discussion BS	0.....	700
Tuesday BS Young People	0.....	286
Veranda.....	10.....	80
Wanderers.....	0.....	214
We Care.....	0.....	113
Where Are We.....	0.....	200

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 Naples Area Intergroup.



The Birthday Club

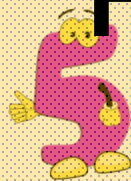
Did you know you can share your sobriety and gratitude in a practical way by joining the AA Birthday Club? Sign up today and be featured in the *Courier*. Show your support for your Central Office. A donation of only one dollar for every year of your sobriety will help carry the message to alcoholics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



Rick G.	56 years
Paul B.	54 years
Ronnie P.	51 years
Ron L.	48 years
Jackie G.	39 years
Bill D.	38 years
Merle B.	38 years
Michael L.	36 years
Dennis F.	35 years
Rad W.	35 years
Judy W.	34 years
Steve K.	32 years
Bill S.	24 years
Ken H.	24 years
Laura .	7 years
Eric S.	6 years



Faithful Fivers Needed



2025 Monthly Faithful Fiver Club

April O., Bill D., Bill S., Eric S., Jeanette H., Jim H., Judy W., Kathryn Mc., Ken H., Ralph W., Rick G., Ron L., Theresa R.

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.

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:

Joe S. 845/554-8721
chair@district20aa.org

Alt. Chair:

Tom D. 845/230-6780
tomadavison@yahoo.com

Registrar:

Scott N., 262/374-2269
registrar@district20aa.org

Treasurer

Bob A., 440/667-4372
treasurer@district20aa.org

Secretary:

Maury D. 239/370-7232
maury@mdailey.com

Service Committees:

Archives

Heather O. 272-2632
district20archives@gmail.com

District 20 Business Meeting

4th Thursday of each month,
7:00pm @ 24 Hour Club
1509 Pine Ridge Road

Current Practices

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

Grapevine / Literature

Lauren F. 220-2792
laurenfrosh@comcast.net
Mary A. 630/215-5091
mjadams12@gmail.com
Business meeting the third
Tuesday of each month at
5:30 p.m., 24 Hour Club

Institutions

Maria M.
mmetchear@aol.com
1st Thursday of each month
at 7:00 p.m., 24 Hour Club

Public Information/CPC

Leonard H., 239/315-6120
leonardheller1@gmail.com
3rd Friday of each month,
at 6:00pm, Serenity Club

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
Twenty-Four Hour
Club
1509 Pine Ridge Road

NAPLES AREA INTERGROUP MEETING

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

SECOND Wednesday of
each month at 7:00pm

Technology Opportunity.

Commitments

DAVID LAWRENCE CENTER

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

WILLOUGH
Sunday, Monday and
Thursday
7:00pm
Peggy E., 269-7651
marco-
angel2000@gmail.com

HAZELDEN
Monday, 7:00pm
Nick Geer 818/424-5463
nicgeer@gmail.com

BRIDGING THE GAP
Joe S., 845/554-8721
joeascalai@icloud.com

Area 15; Panel 75

(South Florida, Ba-
hamas, US and Brit-
ish Virgin Islands,
Antigua, St. Maar-
ten, and Cayman Is-
lands)

Delegate: Lisa D.
delegate@area15aa.org

Alternate: Donna W.
altdelegate@area15aa.org

Chair: Bron F.
chair@area15aa.org

Treasurer: Alan T.
treasurer@area15aa.org

Registrar: Lea A.
registrar@area15aa.org

Secretary: Paul M.
secretary@area15aa.org

Naples Area Intergroup

Trusted Servants

Chair:

Service Opportunity

Interim Chair:

Robert C. 784-8514
bcrowe616@aol.com

Treasurer:

Dalton M.
781/444-7070
daltonmurfee@aol.com

Secretary:

Jasmine C., 220-7798
jasmineyenter@yahoo.com

Members at Large:

Service Opportunities

Office Manager:

Ken Helton
1509-B Pine Ridge Road
Naples, Florida 34109-2198
naplesintergroup@yahoo.com
Office: 239-262-6535
Cell: 239/963-7820
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

Amy D., Becky S., Bill S.,
Caroline H., Carrie W., Gay
S., Geoff S., James S., Joe
S., Libbie B., Natacha A.,
Peggy E., Ralph B., Vicki M.
... and loyal substitutes.

Service Opportunity

After-Hours Phone Volunteers

Bob M., Craig P., Geoff E.,
Heather B., Ken H., Lauren
F., Steve K., and Tim A.

Service Opportunity