

PLAIN'" STRAIGHT

JAN. 1976

CENTRAL OFFICE OF PINELLAS COUNTY-11608 Seminole Bld.

Largo, Florida 33540

Live and Let live-Don't judge or criticize others or conern yourself about what they do.

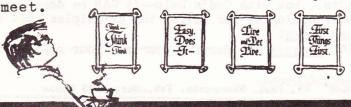
First things first-Do first what's most important-you'll get more done.

Think-Hold back that rash word or thoughtless action. Think before you make descisions.

Easy does it-Haste makes waste. Relax, get rid of tension and rushing.

Let go and Let God-You can't fix everything that's wrong with the world and your family. Let it go. God can't do His work if we're standing in the way. One Day at a Time-Today is the most important day of your life.

Listen and Learn-There's something of value to be learned from everyone you



Thank you to all the groups who have worked so hard for the Unity Meetings and are responsible for over \$1,000.00 donated to your Central Office this past year. Our special gratitude to Harold D. for his untiring efforts on our behalf. We are sorry to hear that Harold is in the hospital. Get well soon.

NEW GROUP

The Bayou Group will meet Saturday nights at 9:30 at the Covenant Presbyterian Church at 4201-6th. St. S., St. Petersburg. This will be a closed meeting.

The Tri-County Central Office has moved to 7404-A No. Florida Ave., Tampa. The new phone is 239-9623.

Larry & Alice L. are the new Chairmen of the Faith Young People's Group. Many thanks for the fine work done in the past by Ed W.

"EXCUSES"

through the years—to JUSTIFY...continued use of alcohol...even as it created unspeakable misery and heartache for the user...and those around him! We have listened...with heavy heart...to the perverted logic of the resistant alcoholic explaining why he..isn't...an alcoholic...and why he needs no outside help—even as his hopes and dreams are fading and his dignity and self—respect are being drained away—even as his mortal life is ebbing!

A frequent..delusion..of the alcoholic..is: "I'M different!" His plea is...that his "Pattern" of imbibing is "different or Unusual"... he drinks more..or..drinks less...or he hasn't been in jail..or a hospital--or he still has a job..or..he's too educated ..or smart..or rich...or that his BODY craves it..and he just can't live without it! What he OVERLOOKS is--that... though his ROUTE...is different---the direction is the SAME...and no alcoholic..ever escapes the fruits of his decision.

None but the alcoholic..can decide his final destiny—and if he seeks the truth he need ask himself but one simple question: "IS MY DRINKING HURTING ME.. or...SOMEONE ELSE?" If the honest answer is YES..his entire illogical rationale crumbles...and it is THEN.. that he will decide on constructive action—or resign himself to his own world of hopeless misery...and lonely ...failure!

If the honest answer is..NO-obviously then, his life should be
free of ANY...conflict or problems...
resulting from drinking: His
relationships with his family...and
others...would draw nor deserve..
critical reproachment--for he would
never knowlingly...PERMIT..unnecessary
..or unimportant "social" drinking...

CONTID

REMEMBER THAT CHRISTMAS

Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.

I crept out of bed and went for a drink But not for the water that comes out of the sink.

I tried whiskey and wine and mixed drinks to boot

And started off on a great drinking toot. It lasted all Christmas and New Years too Until my wife was ready to sue.

A divorce and disgrace and my life on the line

I said I would stop - just give me time. For myself on this world I was always on the top

I was stupid and foolish to think I could stop.

Came the day of truth when the price I must pay

For all of my foolishness and ill-health that day.

I found out my mind could not by itself Stop making me drink from IT on the shelf And then I found out in good ole A. A. I had that help in many a way.

Ralph E. 3 & 11 Group

JD IS WHEREVER MEN AND WOMEN FIND SUPPORT IN EACH OTHER ..

--H. B. WALKER

CAPACITY CROWD CELEBRATE NEW YEAR'S EVE

Scene: Sunset Country Club on Snell Isle in St. Pete

The Home Group Sponsored By:

Players: 241 happy sober members of A.A., Alanon Spouses and dates.

This was the 7th Anniversary of the New Year's Eve Dinner-Dance which a sell-happen....especially....to out crowd attended.

Meeting <u>new</u> and <u>old</u> friends in the program gives you an overwhelming feeling of gratitude for "this gift of sobriety"

Dinner was served at 7 P.M. and was followed by dancing to the wonderful taped music of Paul E.

At 9:30 P.M. a truly spectacular floor show was presented. The talented Jack C. is a masterful "Emcee", and Penny H. and Ray F. danced and sang as a duo. Louise P. "mimed in song" professmally and unexpected world entertainer Vicki Lynn" came on for a finale.

The "Money Tree" of \$26 was won by Jean T., wife of Bill T. of Home Group. Peggy Tr.

PASCO ANSWERING SERVICE

Calls for Help and/or information in the Pinellas-Pasco County Line Area, have been and are being taken by Ronnie and Harry O'L. at 937-4766. Calls from 937- and 934- will be speedily and effectively handled. We thank Ronnie and Harry for the great job they do on this.

SAFETY HARBOR GROUP WILL CELEBRATE THEIR SECOND ANNIVERSARY ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 30th AT 7 O'CLOCK WITH A POT LUCK SUPPER. Y'ALL COME!

The simplest form of 12th stepping is to shake hands with as many people as you possibly can at meetings -- especially the peopleyou dont know ... G

WE PLAN TO HAVE THE YEARLY ANNIVERSARY DINNER AGAIN IN FEBRUARY AND FLYERS WILL BE OUT FOR THIS VERY SOON.

> GOD SHOWS HIS HAND ALLRIGHT, BUT YOU GOTTA CALL TO SEEIT.

TWELVE THINGS TO REMEMBER

The value of time The success of perseverence The pleasure of working The dignity of simplicity The worth of character The power of kindness The influence of example The obligation of duty The wisdom of economy The virtue of patience The improvement of talents The joy of originating Marshall Field

Anything that can happen, will an ALCOHOLIC.

I'm so think right now, I can't mad straight.

I AM ANONYMOUS, HELP ME

Running people down is a bad habit whether you are a motorist or a gossip

The best portion of a good man's life: His little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love.



CENTRAL OFFICE



PLAIN'W' STRAIGHT

FEB 1976

CENTRAL OFFICE OF PINELLAS COUNTY-11608 Seminole Bld.

Largo, Florida 33540

A recent survey shows that 99.4% of the people are happy when criticizing the mistakes of others. There are no mistakes in this paper——It is merely an effort to make 99.4% of the people happy!

We are sorry when we do not get all the news or interests of A. A. in our Newsletter - we'll keep trying to do better. This letter is a little late for for the Big Book Groups's anniversary - the second- which was Feb. 4th. Hope we get the 3rd. in time.

IT'S OFFICIAL

The 5th annual Sun Coast Convention will be held May 21, 22 & 23 at the beautiful Sheraton Sand Key Hotel.

The theme of the convention will be the thought

provoking "Came to Believe".

The unavailibility of the Fort Harrison Hotel has created numerous problems for Chairman Ralph P. and the convention committee, but all systems are "GO" now. Flyers will be out soon and next month's Newsletter will have further details.

Our Group Representatives meetings are growing slowly. All groups without a rep please try to interest someone in service. New York mentions always that too much time is being sprnt on recovery as a subject and not enough time to moving into service. This is not an easy or easily understandable situation as we have no cut and dried rules or regulations, but we can become aware and make an effort. We are largely dependent on group reps for group news and events to appear in the Newsletter.

Tape volunteers flucuate geographically. Right now we have almost adequate coverage in the north end of the county, but we need Sunday and week-day people in the St. Pete area. Create an interest and ask around.

If we cannot do great things we can do small things in a great way.

One-Day-at-a-Time

Central Service "At your Service". It has been brought to our attention that there are members of A. A. who are not aware of the functions of the Central Office so here are the five primary services offered:

1. A service and information center for all A. A.

groups and members in the area.

2. A. A. information center for other agencies, institutions, Doctors, Clergymen and the general public.

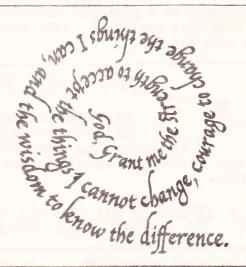
3. A general meeting center for committees and members and anyone seeking help or advice on a

drinking problem.

4. Central Office to channel all Twelve Step calls to the groups from the sick and suffering alcoholic calling for help.

5. It exists to aid the groups in their common purpose of "carrying the A. A. message" to the

alcoholic who still suffers.



This Newsletter is yours - any A. A. member wishing to contribute anything to the letter is encouraged to do so. We also would welcome any group donations. We do not make money on the Newsletter. When we do, we'll let you all know. Perhaps any surplus could be used to have a bigger and better publication. Right now we do not have the staff to expand.

Group Changes

The Faith Young People's Group will meet every Tues. and Thurs. night.

The New & Used Group's open meeting are on the 2nd. & 4th. Thursdays.

Q. Should we tell friends, neighbors, and co-workers we are in AA?

A. AA anonymity is a two-edged responsibility. We should remain anonymous in terms of public media, but we should, if we have any hopes of carrying the message, smash our anonymity at the private and semiprivate level.

It is not enough to help only after a still drunk alcoholic has, as the result of a diligent search, found his way to the "secret" organigation of AA. AA membership is not necessarily anything to be proud of, but it certainly is nothing to be ashamed of. It is, and should be, treated as a matter of accepted, and acceptable fact.

While we may not be quite ready to bellow our story through a megaphone from the top of the highest building in town, we certainly should be ready to let doctors, lawyers, clergymen, friends, and relatives know about AA and our affiliation with it.

WHEN FAITH FAILS PRAYER LIFTS UP

This is the eve of my thirty-sixth birthday and I am sober, which is something that at one time seemed so far away. I owe this great blessing to AA and God.

To have faith in a higher power is wonderful, and yet at times my faith is weak. This prayer has been a great help. The words are old but arranged so that when I had trouble asking for help, this made it a lot easier.

Cur Father, which art in Heaven, I thank you for this day. I am powerless over alcohol and through AA I do believe you can restore me to sanity.

I would like to turn over to you my drinking problem, as well as my will and my life, as I am unable to handle them.

My character has many defects. Among the most serious: Envy, pride, greed, lust, gluttony, anger, laziness. I wish to be rid of them but I am not able to do so by myself and ask that you help me.

Many I have hurt through my drinking, and I am mindful of these people today and stand ready to make amends this day if it should be your will for me.

If through my fault I should offend anyone today, I shall make amends promptly.

I need no longer walk alone, for AA and you, my God, are every moment mine, and my need is but one: To have knowledge of your will for me and the power with which to carry it out.

If you should choose to help another alcoholic through me, I will be grateful, as I wish to share my sobriety, which is a gift this day, and I hope to love my fellow man unselfishly, for love is delight in another's well being.

Fear and remorse need not be my companions, but faith and hope shall take their place this

day. Amen.

I guess one day my faith was weak, or none at all, and I wanted help. But having been a stranger most of my life with God and a church, it was hard. The prayer helped me fill that open hand, and today it still brings me a little closer. — Al F.

AN ALCOHOLIC TALKS TO GOD

Good morning God,
Are you still there? Forgive my little doubts,
but I must share my fears with you. Please care
that I feel lost, and when despair comes over
me, help me accept your will, no matter where
your path may guide me. Let me say aloud, "I
do believe in my higher power". Share your
strength with me. Help me to prepare to face
another day, safe in your care.

With love, a drunk

P. S. this is a prayer.

I got up early one morning and I rushed right into the day,
I had so much to accomplish I didn't take time to pray.

Problems all tumbled about me and heavier came each task. "Why
"Why doesn't God help me?" I wondered but remembered I didn"t ask.

I woke up early this morning and paused before starting the day.

I had so much to accomplish-I had to take time to pray.

Anon.



I have twelve favorite subjects: eleven of them are myself.....

Boy! I sure can keep my conscience busy.

Anonymity is the greatest protection we have against tak-ing that first drink.

If I have no regard for my own anonymity can anyone trust me to have any regard for theirs——We must guard the anonymity of our fellow alcoholics as zealously as our own.

Drinking is only part of the alcoholic's problem. We may be revealing more about ourselves than we want to when we tell about our alcoholism.



FINANCES NEVER HAVE BEEN TOP POPULARITY IN A.A. BUT POPULAR OR NOT, THEY ARE WITH US TO STAY. AS A.A. S, WE HAVE PLEDGED OURSELVES TO SELF-SUPPORT. A TRADITION WHICH HAS MADE OUR FELLOWSHIP UNIQUE INDEED.

Continued support from groups & members is vital if we are to maintain the good health of the Fellowship. With the rapid acceleration of growth, it becomes obvious that now is NOT the time to curtail group services. It is time to urge INCREASED FINANCIAL SUPPORT from a larger PERCENTAGE of groups. In the past four years the percentage of group contributing has fallen from 63.2% to Of course, some groups 56.9%. are in depressed areas, unable to contribute much. However, if all groups would contribute SOMETHING, no matter how little, A A's proud Tradition of self-support would be safe.

In the past four years we have been able to contribute \$55,000 to the General Fund of the G.S. Board, the very fund that once subsidized us for quite a few years. It makes all of us feel good to know the Grapevine is doing its part in unifying our Fellowship

The *60-30-10 suggested group contribution formula be used where applicable and practicable, as well as the \$3.65 per year per member plan. And the 60-30-10 plan should be encouraged by G.S.O and all delegates. (60% to the intergroup (central office) 30% to G.S.O.; 10% to the area committee.

If we are to climb up to a spiritual life, we need to go back down to help others find the way

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLEARWATER BEACH AL-ANONS ON THEIR 15th ANNIVERSARY. We wish we could have announced it ahead of March 2, 1976 time.

Second floor tenant: "If you don't quit playing that saxophone you'll drive me stark raving mad." First floor tenant: "It's too late. I stoppped playing three hours ago."

The TAMPA TRI-COUNTY CENTRAL OFFICE celebrating it's FIRST YEAR ANNIVERSARY Feb. 26th at 8.15 PM With an ALL GROUP MEETING

At Palms Ceia Methodist Church Dale Mabry and Bay to Bay continue to wish them growth and success

DAUGHTER SPEAKS AT FATHER S ANNIVERSARY MARILYN OF CLEVELAND, OHIO, A A MEMBER FOR 18 YEARS WILL SPEAK AT THE ANNIVER-SARY MEETING OF HER FATHER, TED HEALY ON HIS 34th AA ANNIVERSARY. TED WILL ALSO SPEAK CENTRAL GROUP, 1431 CENTRAL MARCH 29, 1976 8PM AVENUE, ST. PETE

QUARTERLY CONFERENCE

APRIL 2,3,4,

RAMODA RANCH

NAPLES

FL

NEW GROUP (c) Ascension Group Tues. 8 P M Episcopal Church of the Ascension Corner of Bay and Pine Lambert Room Clearwater Pn. 442-5306

new meetings

Clearwater Group (c) How It Works

8 P M Friday

Holiday Isles

(c) 12 Step Meeting Monday

Holiday Isles

(c) NON-SMOKERS Meeting Sat.8 P M

CORRECTION FROM LAST ISSUE: Faith Young People meet ONLY on Thursday NOT Tuesday also



COMING EVENTS

A. A.'s welcome to Al Anon's program of Feb. 27th at St. Dunstan's Church Auditorium! where the film "Lois' Story" will be shown. Donations are \$1.00.

There will be a Serenity Retreat at 3010 Perry Ave., Tampa on Feb. 27, 28 & 29 lead by Father Fred Lawrance. Call Tampa 229-2695 for further information.

State A. A. Convention will be August 11th to the 15th. at the Deauville Hotel on Miami Beach. Registration forms should be out by the time you read this.

There will be two week-end retreats this year at St. Leo's Abbey so more can attend and still have smaller groups. Dates are May 21,22 &23rd. and May 28, 29 & 30th. More details later.

Feb 27 - 29th. there will be a Mixed Serenity Retreat at the Franscan Center in Tampa. Call Gerhard W. at 644-3376. The theme is "Love Is--!

Again - don't forget the 31st. Anniversary of A. A. in Pinellas County. Really something to celebrate on Feb. 29, at Trader Vic's, Sheraton-Bel Air, St. Pete. Coffee & Dinner starting at 1:00. There will be a prominent out-of-state speaker. Donations are \$6.75. Call Central Office for more details.

- UNITY MEETING

ST. MARY S CENTER 515 4th St. South An operating committee

has been formed to handle these meetings.



SUNDAY MORNING BREAKFAST and AA OPEN DISCUSSION. You are Welcome to attend. From 8 to 10 AM, every Sunday at the HOWARD JOHNSON'S RESTAURANT TREASURE ISLAND

BINGO

PINELLAS SERENITY CLUB 9:30 P.M. 631 TURNER ST. Every SATURDAY. CLEARWATER COME AND ENJOY YOURSELF

THE PERSON THAT LOSES HIS HEAD IS USUALLY THE LAST ONE TO MISS IT.

A Memorial Service was held for Harold P. Davis at St Mary's Center in St Petersburg, Jan. 22, at 7: P M. We are taught life is eternal when we depart this earth. But the tremendous amount of service Harold gave will go on as long as this earth is in existence. Harold was a delegate to N. Y. He was secretary in our Central Office. He was a faithful and dependable person to take tape every week. He went on all the 12 step calls he received. We all know his dedication to the Unity Meeting.

This is just a little of what we know of his works. Only imagination can give us an inkling of the many people whose lives have been touched by him. In the Central Office a great number of people speak of, and ask of him. Let us go from here with a resolution to aim for the kind of service Harold gave to the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

We are also sorry to report the death of Chas. Venick who had only been in our area for one year but who had 16 years of sobriety. He was a member of the 3 & 11 Group and in his short time here was a very active and hard worker - especially for the Institutional Committee. He will be missed.

But for the GRACE of GOD

TO AVOID BEING POSITIVELY NEGATIVE

We drank for happiness and became unhappy.....We drand for joy and became miserable.....We drank for sociability and became argumentative We drank for sophistication and became obnoxious We drank for friendshipand made enemiesWe drank for sleep and awakened without rest.... We drank for strength and felt weak We drank "medicinally "and aquired health problems.....We d drank for relaxation and got the shakes.
...We drank for bravery and became afraid....We drank for confidence and became doubtful....We drank to make conversation easier and slurred our speech.....We drank to feel heavenly and ended up feeling like hell We drank to forget and were forever haunted We drank for freedom and became slaves. We drank to erase problems and saw them multiply....We drank to cope with life and invited death......

EXCUSES

CONT'D -

...to..jeopardize.... ANYTHING...of TRUE VALUE...in his life! (It is that simple for the NON-alcoholic.)
As frequently as the man who DENIES his alcoholism—is the alcoholic..who... ADMITS it --- but refuses to UNDERSTAND IT! He stoutly declares..that..he can handle it..himself: Any suggestion..that he needs outside help..brings immediate indignation ... and furious anger. From the quivering heights of his wounded manhood ... he scorns any such help as an unthinkable admission of "unmanly weakness" -- and an ... un-

forgiveable reflection on his All-American self-sufficieny!

Three roads are open..for this.. "manly alcoholic". He can "try"...to..handle it (control it)..and continue drinking..with ever-worsening complications (for NO.. alcoholic can ever learn how to control it) -- until..he surrenders..cr DIES!

He can become ... a "reformed drunk" -- which means .. that he merely stops drinking while retaining ALL the obnoxious character defects..and needs to drink-that will

make NOT drinking ... a living Hell!

He can recognize his drinking as an illness, and gratefully accept ANY help... that will bring RECOVERY! Recovery..is not a CURE ... and doesn't begin ... until ... the alcoholic STOPS drinking. Recovery will continue -- only so long as total abstinence is maintained -- and it is our conviction -- that NO method other than AA ... offers so ...

many answers to the alcoholic's needs!

One more fatal excuse we would dispel is: "AA won't work for ME!" Herbt Spencer must have had this alcoholic in mind when he said -- "There is a principle which is a BAR. against ALL INFORMATION -- which is PROOF against ALL ARGUMENTS. . . and which can not fail to keep a man in everlasting IGNORANCE. That principle..is contempt..prior to INVESTIGATION!" The alcoholic who says it WON'T work for him is dead right-for he has never HONESTLY tried it! However, this doesn't mean it CAN'T! We have never seen ANY ALCOHOLIC fail to recover. who went to any lengths to follow AA's 12 Steps of recovery..with honesty..open-minde lness and willingness! There has never been.. any mystery about the failures -- they simply tried to write their own terms!

Let no alcoholic believe that AA is a "sissy-program"...or an easy way out..or he can do it in his spare time! It will take "guts"...perseverance..patience...and all the "will-power" he can muster to completely re-order..a whole lifetime of wrong habits..attitudes and personality traits... but with God's help--it CAN be done! An alcoholic learns too -- that he need never apologize for living the principles that can

only make him a useful ... decent ... human being!

Never forget, "excuses" ... are NOT .. reasons for denying yourself your most precious gift from God-----your life!

Reproduced from "RAILBEAMS" St. Faul, Minnesota, Feb.-Mar. 1964 Issue

THE UNITY MEETING of course is held every Saturday, at 8:00 P.M. (open) at,

515 4th St., South ST. MARY'S CENTER ST. PETERSBURG, FLA.

SUNDAY MORNING BREAKFAST and AA OPEN DISCUSSION. You are Welcome to attend. From 8 to 10 AM, every Sunday at the HOWARD JOHNSON'S RESTAURANT TREASURE ISLAND

PINELLAS SERENITY CLUB 9:30 P.M. 631 TURNER ST. Every SATURDAY. COME AND ENJOY YOURSELF CLEARWATER

AL-ANON NEW GROUPS IN SEMINOLE - Al-Anon and Alateen

Tues. 8 P M Calvary Methodist Church 11000 110th Av N -West of Alt. 19

COMMENTS ON TAPE SERVICE:

Participation by many more A A's, has increased. More are taking it on a substitute basis rather than regularily one night a week. The means more time involved for the secretary, and is a little more worrisome. But it is good to have different ones share and experience the service. We need Two regulars for tape in the Clearwater area for every sixth Sunday. We need Two regulars in the St. Petersburg area for every sixth Sunday. This is from 9 A M Sunday until 9 A M Monday. Anyone else willing or wishing to return to duty, or willing to try on a week-day as a substitute, or take it occasionally, please call the office. Remember many are called when there is no answer.

THE CONVENTION COMMITTEE DOES NOT WANT ANYONE TO THINK THERE IS NOT GOING TO L. A CONVENTION THIS YEAR. PLANS HAVE BEEN HELD UP DUE TO THE FT. HARRISON CHANGE WE WILL BE SENDING OUT FLYERS SOON ON THE PLACE AND PROGRAM

ABOUT SELLING NON _A.A. MATERIALS Occasionally, an upset member writes us that a local central (intergroup) office-Or an A.A. group - is selling literature or mementos that are not Conference approved.

Let it be made plain right away: NO AA SERVICE ENTITY-THE GENERAL SERVICE BOARD, G.S.O., OR THE CONFERENCE-HAS ANY POWER WHATSOEVER TO MAKE ANY CENTRAL OFFICE (OR ANY MEMBER) DO ANYTHING, OR STOP DOING

ANYTHING .

G.S.O. can only share experience with

r



TARRY THE MESSAGE

All we know to date, the 31st Anniversary Dinner served 264 dinners. We would like to know what everyone thought of it? Any comments for improvment, any new ideas, additions or changes. We do want to extend the most grateful thank you to each and everyone who helped make it a success. We will have a complete report of the committee within a few days but it will be by the next issue we can print all this. Ed W.



UNITY UNITY UNITY

"The unity of A A is the most cherished quality our Society has Our lives, the lives of all to come, depend squarely upon it. Without unity, the heart of A A would cease to beat; our world arteries would no longer carry the life-giving grace of God." And "Clearly, our first duty to A A's future is to maintain in full strength what we now have. Only the most vigilant caretaking can assure this. Never should we be lulled into complacent selfsatisfaction by the wide acclaim and success that are everywhere This is the subtle temptation which could render us stagnant today, perchance disintegrate us tomorrow. We have always rallied to meet and transcend failure and crisis. Problems have been our stimulants. How well, though, shall we be able to meet the problems of success?"

At the International Convention in Miami Beach, the late Bernard Smith, nonalcoholic trustee wh played such an important role in creating our service structure. spoke on "Unity and Continuity." He talked of unity as a totality "Our Fellowof RELATED parts. ship is composed of all the groups of A A, the separate areas of the General Service Board and all of its related service organizations, and the Conference and so the whole of the parts becomes ONE -the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. This unity can have continunity only so long as the structure of Alcoholics Anonymous remains strong. Slowly and painstakingly, " Bern continued, "we have built upon the spiritual foundation of this great Society a structure that can, with continued devotion, insulate this Fellowship against the ravages of time, of dissent, of Materialistic decay."



GRATITUDE is the key to SOBRIETY

PLMIN'" STRAIGHT

4PR1L 1976

CENTRAL OFFICE OF PINELLAS COUNTY-11608 Seminole Bld

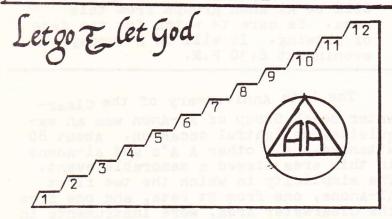
Largo, Florida 33540

Phone 391-3689

DON TRACY TRIBUTE

This issue of "Plain N' Straight" is being "sponsered" by the Sunday Morning Group of Clearwater in Don's memory. Don was a member of this group when he died on March 10th. Because Don was a journalist and author, we felt this would be a fitting tribute to his memory and the A. A. Fellowship he loved. In the past he represented the Koinonia Group in General Service and was interested in the alcoholic patients at Morton Plant Hospital meetings. His most recent non-fiction book was "What You Should Know About Alcoholism".

REMINDER: GROUPS WISHING ENTIRE TABLES PLEASE GET THEIR RESERVATIONS IN EARLY. THESE TABLES ARE ASSIGNED ON A FIRST COME FIRST SERVED BASIS. THE EARLIER YOU SEND IN YOUR REQUEST, THE BETTER OUR ACCOMODATIONS WILL BE.



YOU MUST TAKE THE STEPS THE ESCALATOR IS BROKEN

"AA is the most important thing in my life," said an earnest speaker at our own group meeting the other night.
"And it's easy to remember, too," he went on in all seriousness. "It's the first two letters of the alphabet."

ANNOUNCEMENTS



"Came to Believe..." 5th Amual Suncoast Convention

DATE: May 21,22 & 23

PLACE: Sheraton Sand-Key Hotel, Clearwater Beach

COST: Registration \$6

Registration & Banquet \$15

Alateen Registration \$2 - Banquet \$9
The convention Committee recently were given a
"Grand Tour" of the Sheraton Sand-Key Hotel and
found the facilities available to us to be excellent. Hotel rooms will be \$25 a night for
double or single occupancy with those under 17
free. A 3rd or 4th person sharing the room will
be \$4 per person extra. Please make hotel reservations no later than 2 weeks before the convention. A second mailing on it's way will include hotel reservation envelopes.
Flyers, registration forms etc. have been distributed at General Service meeting. Group Rep

clude hotel reservation envelopes.
Flyers, registration forms etc. have been distributed at General Service meeting, Group Rep meetings and to all group Sec'y/Treas by mail.
All materials have been and are available at Central Office so we find it difficult to believe that some of you haven't heard much about the details. How about it? Let's talk it up a little locally. Beside the fine panelists and splendid main speaker, there will be entertainment on both Friday & Saturday nights! Remember this is YOUR Suncoast convention.

It is eoncouraging and a pleasure to see so many early reservations for the SUNCOAST CONVENTION arriving at the Central Office, especially from different areas of Florida and also from out of state.

RESERVATIONS FOR BANQUET TABLES

When reservations are sent if for entire tables, we need to know the names of each person sitting at each table. If you are sitting at one persons table, please put their name in the corner of your registrations blank. Thank you.

HEARD AT A MEETING: "My slip was a sobering experience."

		NEW MEETINGS AND CHANGES		
SUNDAY				
New	"OD"	Odessa Group Odessa Civic Center State Road 54 to Michigan Ave. Odessa, FL Phone: 937-4766	7:00	P.M.
New	"C"	12 Step Meeting St. Petersburg Group 1024 Central Avenue St. Petersburg, FL 33705 Phone: 894-9407	9:00	A.M.
MONDAY				
New	"C"	12 Step Meeting Holiday Isles Group St. Alban's Episcopal Church 85th & Blind Pass Rd., Room 6 St. Petersburg Beach, FL 33706 Phone: 367-1429	8:00	P.M.
Change Address	"C"	Baigis Meeting Group Redeemer Lutheran Church 4355 Central Avenue, park in rear St. Petersburg, FL. Phone: 345-6040	8:00	P.M.
Omit	"OD"	12 Step Group St. Jude's Cathedral St. Petersburg, FL 33710	8:00	P.M.
TUESDAY				
New	"DD"	Dunedin Group Church of the Good Shepherd Albert and Edgewater Drive Dunedin, FL Phone: 442-1593	8:00	P.M.
New	"C"	Ascension Group Episcopal Church of Ascension Bay and Pine Corner, Lambert Room Clearwater, FL Phone: 442-5306	8:00	P.M.
* New ?	uСw.	Tues. Discussion Group Calvary Methodist Church 11000 - 110 Avenue North Largo, FL	8:00	P.M.
Omit	"0"	Recovery Group S.T.A.R. House St. Petersburg, FL 33701 Phone: 894-3937	8:00	P.M.

MANY THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE GALA, SUCCESSFUL 31st ANNIVERSARY DINNER. Speaker Leo D. from Akron was terrific. The oldest members, male and female were present. The history of A A in Pinellas Co. was given by Bill B. The dinner was enjoyable by all.

· Be good to yoursel



MEMBERSHIP DRAWING: Begins at 10 dollars. Increases \$10.00 a week. At this date 4/3 is now \$90.00. Drawing at Bingo, MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN.

	THURSDAY		(*	PRITHE	
	Change from Tuesday	"OD"	Faith Young Peoples Group Faith Presbyterian Church 5 Patricia Avenue Dunedin, FL 33528 Phone: 733-2956 or 734-2259	8:00	P.M.
	New	"C"	Hoot-N-Holler Group Father Farrell Memorial Hall St. Vincent DePaul Church State Road 595 Holiday, FL Phone: 937-4766	8:00	P.M.
*	Change Address	"C" "O"	New and Used Group 1st and 3rd Thurs. Redeemer Lutheran Church 4355 Central Avenue St. Petersburg, FL 33707	8:00	P.M.
	FRIDAY				
	New	"C"	How It Works 301 Seminole Street Clearwater, FL 33515 Phone: 447-8439	8:00	P.M.
	Change	"OD"	Fri. Nite Big Book Disc. 631 Turner Street Clearwater, FL 33516 Phone: 447-9896	8:00	P.M.
	SATURDAY				
	New	OD"	Non-Smokers Meeting Holiday Isles St. Alban's Episcopal Church 65th & Blind Pass Rd., Room 6 St. Petersburg Beach, FL	8:00	P.M

Coming Events

THE BIG ONE Southeastern 32nd Annual Convention and the Florida 20th Annual Convetion are combined this year. Deauville Hotel Miami Beach, Florida August 11-15. 1976

Retreats:

May 21-22-23 May 28-29-30 Come on and enjoy the fellowship of the SPIRITUAL retreat. A good chance to get away from it all, get some real good A A, talk over your life and problems with your fellows. In any meeting, nothing will be discussed that does not fall under the specific heading of A A material. St Leo College (Holy Name Priory, Girls Campus) For more information, flyers or registeration blanks, contact or call the Central Office.

HOME GROUP DANCE--APRIL 30th FRIDAY FREE FOOD AND DRINKS MUSIC FOR ALL AGES

WEEKLY

Men's A A Luncheon at the FOGCUTTER 34th St. & 1st Av. S. St Pete. Thursdays 12 NOON

To keep it, give it away!



PLAIN'W' STRAIGHT

June 1976

CENTRAL OFFICE OF PINELLAS COUNTY-11608 Seminole Bld.

Largo, Florida 33540

5th Annual Suncoast Convention

Our 5th Annual Suncoast Convention was a grand success. We had registered 386 AA and Al-Anon members, and 27 AlaTeens. These 413 people drank nearly \$1,400. worth of coffee! Of the registrations, 69 were from outside of District I and 14 were from out of state, with KY, VA, GA, PA, NY and Ontario represented!

Our banquet speaker, Dr. Weldon C. from Lakeland was excellent. We got him just in time as he is moving to Austin, T%. Many people worked behind the scenes, and worked hard. The "Praying Hands", painted and donated by Val S. was beautiful.

Special anniversaries over the weekend were BettyLou D., 2 yrs., and Peggy T.. 8 years.

Heavy rains and wind did not daunt the crowd of 295 who attended the banquet evening to hear the speaker and to enjoy the dance.

Betty B.

Coming Events

THE BIG ONE.... U.....

Southeastern 32nd Annual Convention and the Florida 20th Annual Convetion are combined this year.

Deauville Hotel Miami Beach, Florida August 11-15, 1976



Pray for the So-and-So!

COFFEE NERVES?

Henry Daniels' catering service in Denver put together a \$12,000 coffee-maker capable of turning out 5,807,520 cups a day. It was for the International Convention of AA held last July. Mr. Daniels said he had been advised that the conventioneers are chain coffee drinkers, and "they drink 20 cups a day"!

THE TWENTY THIRD PSAALM - CREDIT -The lord is my sponsor: I shall not want. He maketh me to go to many meetings. He leadeth me to sit back relax, and listen with an openmind; He restoreth my soul, my sanity, and my health; He leadeth me in the paths of sobriety, serenity, and fellowship for mine own sake. He teacheth me to think, to take it easy, to live and let live and do the first things first. He maketh me honest, humble and grateful; He teacheth me to accept the things I cannot change, to change the things that I can, and giveth me the wisdom to know the difference. Yea though I walk through the valley of despair, frustration, guilt, and remorse, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me: program, Thy way of life, twelve steps.... They comfort me. Thou preparest a table before in the presence of mine enemies --rationalization, fear, anxiety. self-pity, and resentment; anointest my confused mind jangled nerves with knowledge, understanding, and hope. No longer am I alone, neither am I afraid, nor sick, nor helpless, nor hope-Surely less: My cup runneth over. sobriety and serenity shall follow me everyday of my life, twenty-four hours at a time: As I surrender my will to Thine and carry Thy message to others: And I will dwell in the house of My Higher Power, as understand Him, daily, forever and AMEN ever.

Ralph P., Convention Chairman, would like to thank every one on the Committee who worked so hard and gave so much. He hopes that every one who came was able to take home a little of what was so freely given to us.

SERVICE IS THE RENT WE PAY FOR OUR ROOM ON EARTH

IN CASE YOU DIDN"T KNOW

"Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship" - designed and administrated
by a bunch of ex-drunks whose only
qualification for membership is that
they can't hold their likker and do
not want to learn how. It has no
rules, dues or fees - no nothin' that
any sensible organization seems to
require. At meetings the speakers
start on one subject and end up
talking about something entirely
different, concluding by saying, "I
don't really know anything about the
program except that it works."

The groups are always broke, but always seem to have money; they are
always losing members, but always
seem to grow; they claim AA is a
selfish program, but always seem to
be doing things for others. Every
group passes laws, rules, edicts
and pronouncements which everyone
blithely ignores. Members who disagree with anything are privileged to
walk out in a huff - quitting forever - only to return as though nothing had happened, and to be greeted accordingly.

Nothing is ever planned more than 24 hours ahead - yet great projects are born and survive magnificently. Nothing in AA is according to Hoylehow can it survive? Perhaps it is because we have learned to laugh at ourselves; God made man - He made laughter too. Perhaps He is pleased with our poor efforts and makes everything run right no matter who pushes the wrong buttons. Maybe He is pleased not with our perfection, but with our sincerity; maybe He is pleased because we are trying to be nobody but ourselves.

We don't know how, but it works, and members keep receiving their dividend checks from their AA investment. IT'S SMART TO STAY SOBER!

Submitted by Agnes T.

ONE OF THE FRINGE BENEFITS OF SOBRIETY IS THE ABILITY TO DISAGREE WITHOUT BE--COMING DISAGREEABLE.

NDAY MORNING BREAKFAST and AA OPEN DISCUSSION. You are welcome to attend. 8:30 every Sunday morning at Sambo's. SAMBO'S - 1550 - 66th St. N. St. Pete.

WOMEN, IT IS NOW QUITE CLEAR,
ARE VERY MUCH LIKE MEN,
EXCEPT OF COURSE FOR HERE AND THERE
AND SOMETIMES NOW AND THEN!

G.S.R. Report - District One

May tenth meeting held at Central Office began with the usual roll call, and Secretary and Treasurer's report. The subject was brought up during Business Discussion that District One is allowed one committeeman for each group. As we now have 48 groups, and but five committeemen, the District is entitled to elect one additional commetteeman.

Secretaries for all groups in the District have been sent an information sheet plus a form to be filled with the names of three or more key people who will take the responsibility for twelfth step work in their group area. These key people will contact other members to go out on twelfth step calls. It is important that the groups fill out these forms and return them to Central Office as soon as possible. So for, only six out of 48 groups have responded. Copperation is needed in order to help the suffering alcoholic.

Group Rrpoert: Pinellas Park has added a meeting to its weekly schedule. This is an Open Discussion, held every Sunday at one o'clock, at 6520 Park Blvd. Harold reported that 255 attended the meeting at Holiday Isles on Sunday, May 9th. Bob T. from Lakeland General first gave AA talk and then according to the traditions of AA gave a professional talk.

Our Goal - Every Group in Pinellas represented at each General Service Meeting! Stew M.

"Man takes a drink, drink takes a drink, drink takes a nan." Chinese proverb.

MEN'S LUNCHEON - WEEKLY - FOGCUTTER
34th Street and 1st Ave. S. St.Pete
Thursdays 12 Noon

A policeman stopped a well-dressed man who was singing loudly and staggering along the street in the wee, small hours of the morning and asked, "You got any explanation for wandering around drunk at this time of night?"

"Officer, honest," the reveler said, "if I had an explanation, I'd be home right now!"



PLAIN'W' STRAIGHT

Jack Park

CENTRAL OFFICE OF PINELLAS COUNTY-11608 Seminole Bld.

Largo, Florida 33540

ou are not all

G.S.R. Report--District One
June 14th meeting, held at Central Office,
began with usual roll call, and Sec'y's,
& Treas. report. The first part of Business discussion was Leo S.'s report on
the information sheets and forms that had
been sent to the Secretaries for all grps
in the District; to be filled with the
names of 3 or more key people who will
take the responsibility for 12th step
work in their group area. At last month's
meeting it was reported that only 6 out
of the 48 groups had responded. As of
this month, 19 groups have responded.

Public Information Co-Chmn. reported a total of 15 hrs of D.W.I. classes, 20 hrs of lectures at various high schools, 2½ hrs on radio. One half hour on radio was a question and answer talk show.

roup Report: Serenity Annex, Clwtr., has meetings Mon. and Wed as well as Fri. noon. -- Monday night, the new Al-Anon meeting; Indian Rocks Beach has moved to 2400 Bay Blvd.; St Petersburg Grp. is moving but no definite location as yet.

Clearwater Grp. Sponsonship Comm. gave a report on their grp meeting on Sun. -- with an attendance of 30. Emphasis was on how to make the walk-in newcomer feel welcome. Ralph P. gave a report on the 5th Ann. Suncoast Conv., held at Sand Key. He reported it was well attended, broke even financially—well, almost, with perhaps 5 or 10 dollars in the red.

Our Goal--Every Group in Pinellas represented at each General Service Meeting: Stew M.

Dance:

Home group dance July 30th Fri. Nite. Everyone welcome everything free LIVE MUSIC

SPAGHETTI DINNER

Saturday, July 24, 1976 6:30 P.M.Sat Serenity Club -631 Turner

Panel Meeting and door prizes at 7:30 Bingo and Drawing at 9:30. Buy your tickets now - \$2.00 adult, \$1.00 for Child under 12.

In Memoriam:

"Scottie" William D. Scott

Don Haskett

We have been sadly neglecting to report in our newsletter the tremendous amount of wolwnteer work by our cochairmen, Jim A. and Pat P. for public information and education. For instance, in one months report:—

Clearwater Catholic
Light of Christ Church
10:30 until 1:00
1 speaker - 2 groups
Shorecrest Highschool
1:20 until 2:10

2 speakers 5t. Pete Jr. College Clearwater Campus Health Fair

8:30 until 3:00

Christ Presbyterian Church

Largo Dinner speaker

2 hours

Northeast High 2 classes, 2 days

1 hour each

Boca Ciega High School 1 day, 11:50 until 4:45

3 speakers

Canterbury High School St. Pete, one hour

1 speaker

Clearwater High

1 hour - 2 speakers

Some months have been busier. There have been radio and TV spots covered. The National Safety Council in charge of DWI (driving while intoxicated) classes had 2 AA's for forty minutes at the last session of their DWI school. All this totals a fantastic amount of time and co-ordination with the volunteers who serve on this committe.

MEN'S LUNCHEON - WEEKLY - FOGCUTTER
34th Street and 1st Ave. S. St.Pete
Thursdays 12 Noon

Retreats:

The 10th Annual Spiritual Retreats for AA & Al-Anon at the St Leo's College were a truly rewarding experiece for Ap-

oximately 200 guys and gals who attended. For the first time, a Retreat was made on two consecutive week-ends in May, which made for smaller discussion groups and a much better chance for fellowship. Naturally some of us attending one Retreat missed seeing our friends who attended the other and vice versa; but all in all the real benefit of a Spiritual Retreat is not measured in how many friends we see but in how much closer we come to God; as we understand Him, and thereby grow in our spiritual life.

From comments heard during and after the Retreats, both week-ends accompolishet their purpose in this respect.

The first Retreat was opened by Chas. L. of Casselberry and the seond week-end by Clarence S., also of Casselberry. Both stressed the importance of Spiritual growth to a happy & successful A A life. Father Joe E., as usual kept everything on schedule & nudged us, as only he can do, to keep the purpose of the Retreat in a "good, orderly, direction" 'Nuff said. It was beautiful, rewarding and nspiring. Hope to see you at St Leo's .ext May. Ray F. And the food. - WOW!!!

WEEKEND RETREAT: A Spiritual Retreat Experience for Recovering Alcoholics (Men and Women) to improve our GRASCIOUS CONTÁCT with God....... WHEN: July 9,10,11, 1976 WHERE: The Franciscaan Center, 3010 Perry Avenue, Tampa, Fla., 33603 (813-229-2695). Conducted by Rev. Henry L. (member of the fellowship) Boston, Mass. Retreat Cost: \$35 per person for the weekend, includes a \$5 non-refundable registration fee. Begins: Weskand retreat begins with

registration & room assingment 6:30 P.M. on Friday, July 9th. (No supper will be served on Friday.) Retreat Ends: Sunday, July 11th. after lunch.

Additional Information: Please call or write to Fransiscon center or contact George 0°8. 485-9141

BINGO every Saturday night at 9:30. EARLY BIRD GAME AT 9:00 There is a membership drawing avery week - dues must be up to date and you must be present to win

Do you want to be on tape?

WE NEED A WEDNESDAY AND A THURSDAY TAPE PERSON IN THE NORTH END OF THE COUNTY ALSO SUBSTITUTES-THOSE WHO ARE WILLING TO TAKE IT NOW AND THEN

Telp Wanted Volunteer!



Except for the extensive remodeling Ralph P. did in the Central Office 14 months ago, there has been no painting, up keep, repair, cleaning or painting done. Even if we are fortunate to find larger quarters it would a decent idea to leave this office in better condition than it is at present. Any volunteers who would be willing to paint the office in lighter, cleaner colors would be welcome. Is there anyone with an el-

ectric scrubber who would volunteer to clean the terrazo floor in the meeting room?

++++ NEEDED +++++++++++ NEEDED +++++ If anyone has, or knows of anyone with a spare set of drapes, 112 inches wide, 86 inches long (14 pleats) the Central Office drapes need replaced. A pair of 56 inch ones could be tacked together.

Also anyone with a spare, or an old vacuum cleaner, the office is in need of one. The sec'y has been hauling one to and from the office from home, but it is now not in working order.

************* TheTHIRD Edition of The Big Book is in stock at the Central Office. The number of personal stories has been increased to 44 in this edition. basic text (pages 1 thru 164) remain unchanged. Thirteen new stories are included in sections headed "They Stopped in Time" and "They Lost Nearly All. ********

Comung Events

THE BIG ONE O.... Southeastern 32nd Annual Convention and the Florida 20th Annual Convetion are combined this year.

Deauville Hotel Miami Beach, Florida August 11-15, 1976



PLAIN'S

CENTRAL OFFICE OF PINELLAS COUNTY-11608 Seminole Bld.

Largo, Florida 33540

The First Tradition

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.

DO YOU BELONG?

Are you an active member, The kind that would be missed? Or are you just contented That your name is on the list? Do you attend the meetings, And mingle with the flock, Or do you stay - - -And criticize and knock? Do you take an active part To help the work along, Or are you satisfied to be The kind that "Just Belong"? Do you ever go to visit Or call a member that is sick? Or leave the work to just a few, And then call them the "Clique"? There's quite a pregram scheduled That I'm sure you've heard about, And we'll appreciate it if you, too, Will come and help us out. So come to meetings often And help with hand and heart, Don't just be a member, But take an active part. Joe S. brought from Chicago

THE BIG ONE - LAST CHANCE Southeastern 32nd Annual Convention, and the Florida 20th Annual Convention are combined this year.

Deauville Hotel Miami Beach, Florida August 11-15, 1976

Reservation applications are now available at the Central Office. This is truly the BIG one!

n Memoriam:

ADIN FOX LUCY SILO (her brother is our Andy S. from Spring Hill)

A Declaration of Unity

This we owe to A.A.'s future:

To place our common welfare first;

To keep our fellowship united.

For on A.A. unity depend our lives,

And the lives of those to come.

Our individual sobriety depends on the group. The group depends on us. We soon learn that unless we curb our individual desires and ambitions, we can damage the group.

UNITY MEETING

8:00 P M

Open Saturdays
St. Mary's Center
515 Fourth Street South
St Petersburg, FL 33701

The Committee for these meetings wishes to thank everyone who has helped and participated with these meetings. Especially those who have attended to make it a success. This Committee has done a great A. A. service since the death of Harold D. who was chairman.

A woman who was being bawled out by a policeman for jaywalking told him, "Sure I can read the 'Don't Walk' signs, but I thought they were bus company advertisements"

EARLY BUT IMPORTANT!

Father Joseph M., Baltimore, author and narrator of Chalk Talk, will speak at an open AA meeting on Thursday, Nov. 1.8, at St. Jerome's in Largo. Volunteers will bee needed for Committees such as serving coffee etc. More information later.

MEN'S LUNCHEON - WEEKLY - FOGCUTTER
34th Street and 1st Ave. S. St.Pete
Thursdays 12 Noon

SUNDAY MORNING BREAKFAST and AA OPEN DISCUSSION. You are welcome to attend. 8:30 every Sunday morning at Sambo's. SAMBO'S - 1550 - 66th St. N. St. Pete.

DON'T POINT A FINGER...
...HOLD OUT A HAND