



ADD-A-LINE



Published for AA Members in Northeast Florida Since November 1962

Northeast Florida

Intergroup

3128 Beach Boulevard
 Jacksonville, FL 32207
 Tel. 399-8535 Fax 399-8537

Website: www.neflaa.org

E-mail:

neflintergroup@gmail.com

9 am to 5 pm Mon.- Fri.

SPECIAL OLD TIMER EDITION INTERVIEW WITH MARY LOU H.

Part Time As Needed Position Open

NEFL Intergroup has an opening for a part time as needed employee.

- Hours as needed
- Customer oriented
- Basic Word, Excel, and Email skills
- Must have 6 onths of sobriety

If you are interested, please call the Intergroup office:
 904-399-4939

Committee Meetings

Via Zoom

Intergroup Steering Committee,

Tuesday, March 23 , 2021 at 5:30

Zoom ID: 881 4593 5259

PWD: 587098

Intergroup Business

Saturday, April 3, 2021 at 9:45am

Zoom ID: 897 7440 1312

PWD: nefl3128



Northeast Florida Intergroup now has added another secure, convenient way to make Group, Individual, and Faithful Five contributions. Visit our website, neflaa.org for a link.

Be sure to designate what type of contribution you are making: Group, Individual, Faithful Fiver.

Thank you for your continued support of NEFL INTERGROUP!

If you are not familiar with Venmo and would like to know more, visit venmo.com for details.



The Special Events Committee is reviewing the venue, format and date for a Movie Night based on feedback received in February's Survey Monkey. We want to have a fun, financially feasible and safe event for the fellowship. More to follow in the April Add A Line



IN MEMORY...

THE FOLLOWING MEMBER
 WILL BE FONDLY REMEMBERED
 AND SADLY MISSED.
MISS ALICE
 DISTRICT 6, ST. AUGUSTINE

Third Step " Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him."

"Reprinted with permission from Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions Copyright © Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc."

Third Tradition " The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking."

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Third Concept " As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relation between the groups, the Conference, the A.A. General Service Board and its several service corporations, staffs, committees and executives, and of thus insuring their effective leadership, it is here suggested that we endow each of these elements of world service with a traditional "Right of Decision."

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DROP THE ROCK WORKSHOP

Sunday, March 21, 2021

12:30pm –5:30 pm EST

Location: Virtual Meeting Room

Registration required to obtain ID and Password.
Limited to the first 100 who register.

To register, please email
droptherockjax@gmail.com

Brought to you by the Drop the Rock Group of
District 30, Area 14



North Florida Area Assembly

April 5-7, 2021

Workshops and Fellowship

Via Zoom

More details to follow in April Add A Line!

64th Florida State Convention

August 5-8, 2021

www.64.floridastateconvention.com



Service Opportunity

The Intergroup Office needs volunteers. Time slots are 2-4 hours on a regular schedule. Duties include answering the phone, assisting customers, counting inventory, and light cleaning. You must have at least six months of sobriety.

Call Intergroup at 904-399-8535



<u>Committee Chair Positions</u>	
<u>Intergroup Chair</u> Kevin Jr. email: Kevin.Gartland08@comcast.net	904-614-7480
<u>Intergroup Vice Chair</u> Paul C. email: pacman257@gmail.com	904-885-5934
<u>Intergroup Treasurer</u> Rita H. email: flrita@comcast.net	904-703-3655
<u>Steering Committee Chair</u> Maggie R. email: mbmrowe@icloud.com	904-707-6125
<u>Accessibility Committee</u> Nanci S. email: sandnanci@gmail.com	239-603-1662
<u>Add-A-Line Editor</u> Angie B. email: nefladdaline@gmail.com	904-655-8471
<u>Archives Committee</u> Charlie M. email: ggmoyer@aol.com	904-247-3421
<u>Archivist</u> Tom W. email: twicks41fl@gmail.com	201-424-3827
<u>Corrections Co-Chair</u> Steve C. email: cgull24@comcast.net Kathy D. email: kadaiker@yahoo.com	904-449-6210 602-820-6644
<u>CPC/PI Chair</u> Stephanie S. email: sandybrown215@gmail.com	904-343-2489
<u>Finance Chair</u> Dan B. email: d.borcher@comcast.net	904-737-7532
<u>Grapevine Chair</u> Angie B. email: neflintergroup@gmail.com	904-655-8471
<u>Parliamentarian</u> Linda G. email: sassym1953@gmail.com	904-608-1634
<u>Phone Army Chair</u> Kara B. email: karabphonearmy@gmail.com	904-402-1920
<u>Secretary</u> Regina A. email: ralai@comcast.net	904-994-6061
<u>Social Events Co-Chair</u> Vacant email: Rosie M. email: rosiemak333@gmail.com	904-444-8259
<u>Treatment Chair</u> Carl G. email: cgian9@gmail.com	904-497-9769
<u>Zoom Host</u> Andrew M. email: asmarch89@gmail.com	904-760-2009

INTERGROUP OFFICE LOG

<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>2021 JAN</u>	<u>2020 JAN</u>
Phone Army	233	286
AA Calls	217	197
Admin & Other Info	97	120
12 Step	6	12
Visitors	102	191

NORTH FLORIDA AREA 14



Saturday March 6, 2021
1:00 PM EST

A Virtual Event on Zoom

**GSRs, Alt GSRs, District Committee
Members and all other AA members**

General Service Conference Agendas
Presented by Ruth R.
Delegate Area 14 Panel 71
and others

Meeting ID: 859 5800 8684
PASSCODE: serenity
PHONE: Call 929 205 6099
ID: 859 5800 8684
PASSCODE: 56356085

FAITHFUL FIVERS

Anonymous 1`	Maggie R.
Anonymous 2	Mark Van E.
Barbara M.	Peter C.
Carl G.	Rick T.
Cynthia G.	Rita H.
Charlie M.	Roger L.
Debra W.	Ruth R.
Faith I.	Sally F.
Jean O'C.	Samantha L.
John D.	Samuel O.L.
Holly G.	Sue G.
Jonathan B.	Susan I
Linda G.	Susanne B.
Lon L.	Theresa M.
Mich W.	Wendy H.
Michael I.	

A letter from AA World Service

February 4, 2021

Dear Conference members, Intergroups and Central Offices,

The Board of Directors of A.A. World Services wishes each and every member of our Fellowship and their loved ones the happiest New Year. As we reflect back on the extraordinary events that we all have been experiencing it is with hearts full of gratitude that we say thank you to each and every group and member for all of the spectacular work of carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic that has taken place in these difficult times.

For many, this meant pivoting our groups to be online. For some, greeters became temperature screeners, enthusiastically encouraging mask use. In many of our meetings the coffee maker position went away and the online meeting host position appeared. As our many local A.A. offices met unsure financial outlooks, groups across the U.S. and Canada figured out how to make their Seventh Tradition support digital and supported one another as a whole. Service workers across the Fellowship worked from home, often tired and understaffed. As the pandemic pushed surges in binge drinking to new heights, our groups met the challenge head on and introduced a new generation of alcoholics to our program who have been sober for months now and have never even experienced an in-person meeting. The best is surely yet to come.

In the early months of 2020, many would not have imagined we could carry our message as fully, as far and as freely as we have online in the last 9-10 months. Some would have actively argued it could not be done. As a society, A.A. has never faced these challenges before. With no historical reference point for us to look to, after 85 years we faced a new pioneering period.

A.A. members everywhere responded, adapted, and met calamity with serenity. We are a resilient lot. We have seen clearly that the message of A.A. and the lifesaving experience of our membership need not be limited by time, space, or custom. We are held up by 36 spiritual principles in our Steps, Traditions, and Concepts that we can absolutely rely on to guide us through any uncertainty or challenge ahead.

We understand more clearly today the importance of prudence and why we keep a reserve. We have new appreciation for group conscience and its ability to be found even over great distances. Our primary purpose served to keep us unified and as a buoy in uncertain times where being of service to others has helped us through the storm. The evidence of these events over the last year make clear that our legacies of Unity, Service, and Recovery remain strong. We as a board are rejuvenated with hope for a new year ahead and all the great opportunity that awaits as the world begins the slow process of recovery from the pandemic.

Covid-19 has brought very hard, and sometimes tragic events to many among us and around us. In taking stock, these circumstances have forced a crack in our rigidity and created light where before there was only a glimmer. If we leave room for that light to grow and adhere steadfastly to our principles, we can confidently face any uncertainty ahead.

As we continue meeting this challenge and those ahead, let us together continue to "grow in understanding and effectiveness," constantly working toward ensuring that any person needing the message of Alcoholics Anonymous can find it, and that together we preserve that message for the generations of alcoholics still to come.

Yours in service,
Beau B.,
Chairperson A.A.W.S. Board

Celebrating AA Birthdays

November

St. Nicholas

Myra V. 1 yr

Surrender to Win

Marilyn G. 31 yrs

January

Central Group

Travis T. 1 yr

Kelly D. 2 yrs

Mike B. 8 yrs

Jose 27 yrs

Claire 31 yrs

St. Nicholas

Antoinette 2 yrs

February

7 am Coffee and Reading

Scott C. 3 yrs

Warren C 3 yrs

Mike M. 4 yrs

Roger L. 5 yrs

Dixie A. 8 yrs

Shelly S. 16 yrs

Fiesta

Jay S. 10 yrs

Mandarin Women

Cat 8 yrs

Megan 11 yrs

Susan 23 yrs

Trout River Group

Don T. 1 yr

Bob C. 19 yrs

March

7 am Coffee and Reading

Michael M. 2 yrs

Troy C. 2 yrs

Dan K. 2 yrs

Billy B. 3 yrs

Douglas H. 9 yrs

Jeff W. 10 yrs

Scott D. 11 yrs

Jill W. 41 yrs

Fiesta

Shelly S. 16 yrs

Tomo 35 yrs

I Am Responsible

Angela T. 4 yrs

Virginia S. 43 yrs

Trout River Group

Kendra M. 1 yr

Jim H. 2 yrs

Tammy C 10 yrs

Tim M. 10 yrs

Ted B. 28 yrs

Pam S. 29 yrs



Service Opportunity



The Phone Army is currently in need of volunteers. Please contact NEFL Intergroup Office if Interested. 904-399-8535

ACCOUNT BALANCES

JAN. 31, 2021

Checking/Savings	
1021 · Cash - Regions Bank	\$15,413.85
1024 · Cash in Drawer	\$211.08
Total Checking/Savings	\$15,624.93
1360 · Inventory	\$14,568.27
1400 · Prudent Reserve	
1476 · Regions Bank 5982- CD #001	\$10,150.12
1481 · Regions Bank 6794- CD #002	\$10,442.73
1486 · Regions Bank - CD #003	\$10,081.98
Total 1400 · Prudent Reserve	\$30,674.83

2021 District Committee Contact and Meeting Info updated 2/19/2021

	Position & Name	E mail	Phone	Monthly Meeting
District 1:	DCM - Roger L.	DCM.District.1NFL@gmail.com	904-318-8535	Zoom meeting , 3rd Tuesday @ 6:45 pm on Zoom: ID 481 684 9778, PWD: 752099
District 3:	DCM- Mike M	District3Area14DCM@gmail.com	904-729-9260	In Person , 3rd Sunday, 1 pm. @ Clay County Club, 1835 Smith St. Orange Park, Fl. 32073
District 4:	DCM - June C.	jpjcart@gmail.com	904-524-7917	Zoom meeting , 3rd Thursday @ 7:00 pm, ID: 830 4297 9644. PWD: ezduzit
District 6:	DCM- Jeanne W.	dcmdist6@gmail.com	904-252-4560	Zoom meeting ,1st Monday @ 6:00 pm, Call DCM for codes
District 24:	DCM - 'beth E.	egeserviceaddress@outlook.com	386-259-8724	In Person ,1st Wednesday @ 6:30 pm, St. Marks Episcopal Church, 310 North Second, Palatka, FL
District 25:	DCM - Sarah P.	sarahestes20@hotmail.com	407-865-4861	Zoom Meeting , 1st Sunday @ 5:30PM, meeting ID: 884-8317 PWD: 1234
District 30:	DCM - Bryant G.	ggram1701aa@gmail.com	352-575-4005	Zoom meeting , 4th Saturday @ 9:30 am, meeting ID: 832 3839 0605 PWD:362451

PROPOSED BY-LAWS CHANGE TO AMEND APPENDIX L TO INCLUDE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ARCHIVES COMMITTEE APPROVED AT THE JANUARY 2, 2021 INTERGROUP BUSINESS MEETING

THIS IS TO BE VOTED ON AT THE MARCH 6, 2021 INTERGROUP BUSINESS MEETING

PRESENT APPENDIX L :

Appendix L—Standing Committees (Archives)

Archives:

PROPOSED APPENDIX L:

Appendix L –Standing Committees (Archives)

Archives: Responsible for preparing and maintaining Intergroup historical documents, conducting and sharing Oldtimer interviews and Intergroup, District, and Group histories, and preparing AA and Intergroup Archives displays and participating in AA Archives workshops and other AA Archives activities.

PROPOSED BY-LAWS CHANGE TO ADD APPENDIX M FOR THE PARLIAMENTARIAN POSITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES APPROVED AT THE JANUARY 2, 2021 INTERGROUP BUSINESS MEETING

THIS IS TO BE VOTED ON AT THE MARCH 6, 2021 INTERGROUP BUSINESS MEETING

PRESENT APPENDIX M :

None

PROPOSED APPENDIX M:

Appendix M - Parliamentarian

The Parliamentarian position is a two(2) year term appointed by the incoming Chairperson, to coincide with the current rotation. This position does not have a vote at the Business Meeting.

A. Responsibilities

The duties of the Parliamentarian position include but are not limited to the following activities:

- 1) Regular attendance at the Intergroup Business Meeting
- 2) Assist the chairperson to keep the Intergroup Business Meeting operating within Robert’s Rules of Order as amended by the General Service Conference and the ByLaws and Guidelines.

B. Qualifications for position include:

- 1) Should have a good working knowledge of Robert’s Rules of Order as amended by the General Service Conference.
- 2) Has the time and desire to be present at the Intergroup Business Meeting.
- 3) Has or is willing to gain a good working knowledge of the Bylaws and Guidelines.

	Jan 2021	Jan 2020
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
4000 · Contribution Income		
4002 · Groups	\$6,857.25	\$9,469.77
4003 · Pink Can Contribution	\$85.60	\$343.67
4005 · Faithful Five	\$25.00	\$170.40
4007 · Other Contributions	\$555.48	
Total 4000 · Contribution Income	\$7,523.33	\$9,983.84
4020 · Retail Income	\$3,023.76	\$7,752.22
4040 · Monthly IG Mtg / Otr		
4042 · Business Meeting		\$34.00
Total 4040 · Monthly IG Mtg / Otr		\$34.00
Total Income	\$10,547.09	\$17,770.06
Cost of Goods Sold		
4510 · Cost of Retail Sales	\$2,061.35	\$6,019.66
5001 · Cost of Revenues - Other		
5215 · IG Business Meeting Expense		\$34.00
5195 · CC Fees	\$98.19	\$242.78
5290 · IG Breakfast Expense		\$190.34
59900 · POS Inventory Adjustments	\$32.08	(\$67.17)
Total 5001 · Cost of Revenues - Other	\$130.27	\$399.95
Total COGS	\$2,191.62	\$6,419.61
Gross Profit	\$8,355.47	\$11,350.45
Expense		
60000 · Salaries and Benefits		
6560 · Wages	\$1,826.35	\$2,351.50
6565 · Payroll Taxes	\$249.33	\$321.03
Total 60000 · Salaries and Benefits	\$2,075.68	\$2,672.53
61000 · Office Expense		
Total 61000 · Office Expense	\$887.41	\$1,127.70
62000 · Facilities and maintenance		
Total 62000 · Facilities and maintenance	\$1,270.81	\$1,833.11
5300 · When & Where Cost		
55000 · Committees Expense		
5530 · CPC/PI		(\$42.21)
5540 · Corrections	\$1.29	\$2,132.20
5560 · Newsletter	\$263.61	\$743.49
5570 · Phone Army	\$24.95	\$24.95
5585 · Accessibility	\$24.20	\$43.94
Total 55000 · Committees Expense	\$314.05	\$2,902.37
70900 · Business Expenses		
5220 · Dues/Fees/Licenses		\$75.00
Total 70900 · Business Expenses		\$75.00
62100 · Contract Services		
5200 · Professional Fees	\$300.00	\$300.00
Total 62100 · Contract Services	\$300.00	\$300.00
65100 · Other Expenses		
5190 · Bank Charges	\$5.00	\$5.00
Total 65100 · Other Expenses	\$5.00	\$5.00
68300 · Travel and Meetings		
68310 · Conference, Convention, Meeting	\$86.37	
Total 68300 · Travel and Meetings	\$86.37	
Total Expense	\$4,939.32	\$8,915.71
Net Ordinary Income	\$3,416.15	\$2,434.74
Other Income/Expense		
Other Income		
73000 · Other Income		
73050 · Interest Income	\$86.43	\$123.00
6310 · Sales Tax Collection Allowance		\$9.49
6301 · Cash Short/Over POS		\$184.00
Total 73000 · Other Income	\$86.43	\$316.49
Total Other Income	\$86.43	\$316.49
Net Other Income	\$86.43	\$316.49
Net Income	\$3,502.58	\$2,751.23

GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS JANUARY 2021

		Att			Att
Group Name	Jan-21	Feb Meet	Group Name	Jan-21	Feb Meet
12 & 12 Group		X	Riverside (Tom S) Group	\$93.00	
BAA	\$60.00		Rule 62	\$50.00	X
Beaches Unity Group (BUG)	\$180.00		St. Nicholas		X
District 6 - Treasury	\$600.00		Salisbury Road		X
Downtown Group	\$700.00		Saturday Night Live - St. Augustin	\$61.95	
Fernandina Beach	\$60.00	X	Serenity at Noon Group	\$40.72	
Fiesta Group	\$334.25	X	Sunday Morning Palatka		X
Free Mens Group	\$270.00		The Crux of the Problem	\$300.00	
Hold On Group	\$50.00		The Herd	\$209.00	
Jax Beaches YPG		X	The James Gang	\$400.00	
Jumping Off Place	\$26.95		Third St Third Tradition Group	\$120.00	
K I S		X	This Too Shall Pass		X
Liars Paradise Group	\$160.00		Villagers	\$75.60	
LoveNAction		X	Way Out Group	\$49.20	
Mandarin Women In Recovery		X	Wesconnect		X
Men's Big Book Study		X	West Jacksonville Mens Group	\$185.00	
Middleburg Group	\$100.00		Winner's Group	\$150.00	
Morning After Group	\$25.00		Winning Game Group	\$900.00	
Orange Park Group	\$1,016.00		Women Enjoying Sobriety	\$377.08	
Other Side of the Bridge	\$50.00		Yulee Group	\$140.00	
Palm Valley Mens Group	\$73.50		TOTAL	6,857.25	

IG Repts Attending the February 2021 Meeting == 14
 Groups Contributing in January 2021 == 30

Total Attending the February 2021 Meeting == 40



Old Timer's Story for the March 2021 Add-A-Line

INTERVIEW WITH MARY LOU H

My name is Sally F, and I am interviewing Mary Lou H. on July 20, 2020 via the Zoom platform. Marry Lou has 37 years sobriety. We are not doing an in person interview due to the COVID-19 19 Pandemic. (Interviewed, transcribed and edited by Sally F

Sally: What is your sobriety date?

Mary Lou: My sobriety date is June 15, 1983.

S: Let's just start talking about your childhood.

ML: I grew up in Somerville, New Jersey in a lovely, stable, middle class family. I went to Catholic school all my life, right up through my graduate programs; it was New Jersey in the 50s. It was quite a lovely place to be. On the flip side of that, there was a whole lot of drinking going on in my neighborhood. Wherever I have lived with my parents, there always seems to be an alcoholic next door. My mom, being a very open and neighborly person, would often take a person under her wing, and they would proceed to have escapades together. They would just find fun. I remember that they would go the Flemington Furs, and there would be a fashion show. And my mother would lose her friend in the process, and her friend would be found passed out on the furs.

Because this friend was having so much difficulty, we also kind of adopted her daughter into our family, and Nancy became my best, dearest friend as a child. And she suffered from the fact that her mother was an alcoholic. Nancy and I, as very little children, were watching Red Skelton on TV one day. and he was pretending to be drunk. I sure he wasn't in real life. We decided we would follow suit, and I knew where some cough medicine was kept and we proceeded to finish a bottle between us. Nancy then toddled home. and I apparently ran around the house on my tricycle until I passed out which was my pattern to come for the next many years. Drink too much and pass out.

Fast forward to when I am probably 13 or 14, and there is a young man in the neighborhood. He was the first of the hippies. He had long hair and bare feet and a guitar. He came round. New Jersey was beautiful then. and it still is in parts. We went to a local river and sat by the river bank. He proceeded to give me a tall Colt 45 malt liquor. Being the good alcoholic that I am, I pretty much drank that quickly and in one sitting. The world was all right, and everything clicked. Everything was wonderful. Everything was especially beautiful. I could describe to you in great detail the beauty of river and the sandy bank we were on and the sun and the green of the summer, And of course, he was serenading me on his guitar, All was right with the world.

And for the next 15-20 years, I chased that feeling of the first drink which was exceptional and wonderful and brought nothing but wrack and ruin into my life.

I did very well in high school. I excelled but wanted to get away from my hometown. I had a very strong feeling that I needed a geographic. even at that young age. At 17, I wanted to leave the boyfriend behind, get away from my parents and strike out on my own. I did, and I had a wonderful time in Boston. But I felt that there was no one watching over me, and I went full blown into the 60s. I graduated high school in 1969 and so it was free love and free drugs and free rock n' roll. It was a glorious time and if anything, it just accelerated my addiction.

I met a lovely man very early on in college, and we married at 19 when I was a junior and he was a junior as well. That marriage lasted five years, and the reason it ended was because he was "no fun" and didn't drink like me. I basically left the love of my life, a wonderful man, and I left behind the life that I had envisioned for myself in the Northeast. I very much loved that area of the country and pictured myself being a successful Boston attorney's wife. My drinking cost me that.



ML (con't) I emotionally, spiritually was always able to work and go to school despite my alcoholism. It got so bad in Boston that I had nowhere to turn, or morally. I decided to move to Florida because my parents had moved here. I was looking for that stability. I needed someone to say, "What's wrong with you?" "Why are you drinking the way you are drinking?". "Why are you acting the way you're acting". Of course, that didn't work. It didn't last. I had a degree in special education and a masters in teaching deaf, blind and multi-handicapped children. My mother lived in Ocala, and she said that she had heard that there is this school for the deaf and blind in St. Augustine. Why don't we check that out?

**SPECIAL ARCHIVES
EDITION MARCH
2021 ADD A LINE
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Interview of Mary Lou H.**

So, thanks to her, I came here. I had worked at the Perkins School for the Blind in Boston so I had a good resume. I went to St. Augustine in 1981 and I was hired immediately. I spent the next 35 years there. It was a wonderful career!

S: How did you get started in AA? What meetings did you go to?

ML: My first meeting was the Oldest City Group at 144 King Street. It was a wonderful event. I can tell you many of the people who were there because one of them was my second husband who I met almost immediately. I met my first husband the first week of college, and I met my second husband the first week I went to AA.

Now the interesting part of that is my first sponsor was Kathy K. and she told me that it is not wise or prudent to have a serious relationship until you have been in the program for a year. Tom and I started date almost immediately and we dated for a year. After a year we got married and had two beautiful children. I love to say this. Those two children are now 34 and 32 and they have never seen me drunk and they have never seen their Dad drunk. Tom S., who is my ex-husband now, has 44 years of sobriety and I have 37 as of this writing in 2020.



In my early days in the program, I was on such a pink cloud. It was the first time I was ever completely sure that that everything was going to be ok. I had such a feeling of peace and hope and camaraderie with the people. There was mostly older men and older couples that were in the program at that time. The couples tended to each have their own meeting and kind of be the "elder statesmen" of meetings. Alice and Perry had the Oldest City Group. My sponsor and her husband, Kathy and Frank, had the Shamrock Group which was in the Methodist Church down the street from Scarlett O'Hara's. That was one of the meetings I went to the most.

I jumped right into service work and became the secretary of the Shamrock Group but I always considered Oldest City to be my home group. I don't remember hearing that much about home groups back in those days. One of the reasons might be that there weren't that many meetings. I do remember very clearly that in all of St. Augustine when I first came in, there was really only one meeting a night.

There might have been daytime meetings at the Serenity Club but I didn't go. My ex-husband, Tom, was a counselor with alcoholics here in town at Twin Oaks and Stuart M. and he also worked up in Jacksonville at the detox up there, Gateway. He would tell me that it would be best if I didn't go to the Serenity Club alone in those days because it was known to be a place where newcomers came in, where often street people would hang out. and he didn't feel that it was all that safe for me to go there alone. There were probably daytime meetings on the weekends that I could have gone to there but he told me I shouldn't go.

What I remember, and I kind of miss these, were the speaker meetings where the speaker would speak for a whole hour. When I first came in, I didn't feel like I had all that much to say, and we were also very clearly told "take the cotton out of your ears and put it in your mouth", and "sit on your hands and listen". We were not really encouraged to say anything which was a blessing because I didn't have a whole lot to say. I would really love those long hour long speaker meetings where people would tell their whole experience, strength and hope, and I could identify with everyone, male, female, young, old. It was so beautiful and that to be me seemed like the beginning of where I could love everyone in the program based on their story, not based on how they looked or their educational background. I was raised to be quite a snob, I guess.



S: It is a New England Thing. Where did you go to school?

ML: Or what do you do? How high have you gotten on the pecking order? My biggest memory of walking into that Oldest City Group was I felt like I was home. I really felt like I was at home. It was very akin to that very first drink where I felt like "Oh. Everything is going to be ok." I found my place.

I didn't get much acceptance from my Mom. She was the Matriarch and my Dad was the Saint and everything I did was ok. But my mother was keeping score. She did not at all like the fact that I was an alcoholic. I remember she came to a meeting once, I think it was in Central Florida where they lived. I had gone to a meeting over there. and I think I had invited her to come to a meeting. I did it so she would see what it was all about and hopefully be more understanding. She would come right out and say "You are not an alcoholic. No, No!" I was emptying the ashtrays at this meeting, and I didn't even smoke. She was appalled. Now, she was almost a chain smoker, and I had emptied her ashtrays many a time but for her to see me in that kind of service was most distressing to her.



But that is my plug for getting into service early because that really did make a difference. Being the secretary at Shamrock and making coffee and doing those kinds of things really...I needed humility. I had gone to a prestigious college, Boston College. And I was a teacher. That is what I was supposed to be. But I lost all of that, not physically but emotionally, to my disease. I never lost my job. When I got down here and got another Masters and worked at the school for 20 years. Then I became the Principal after I got the Leadership degree. I couldn't have done any of that if I hadn't not been sober. I owe every rung that I climbed in this world, for the last 37 years, I owe that to the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.



I think one of the most wonderful things is that my kids grew up in what I like to think of as an AA household. My kids will actually say things like "You are going to be amazed before you are halfway through". My ex will often, we are still very close, he will say things to me like "Get grateful, you bum". We have the jargon. The kids were raised with the program. And that is a wonderful thing. They were both raised Catholic and my son's religion is surfing and my daughter has joined this very wonderful Bible based church down in Tampa. But they are both really good kids. I am so grateful for that. I am so blessed to have that.

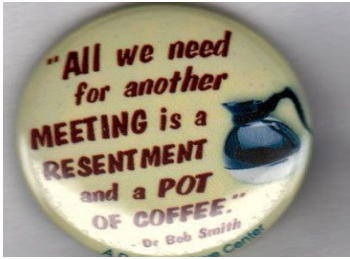
S: So, you knew Perry and Alice G.

ML: And Frank and Kathy.

S: And your service work. Did you ever start a group?

ML: No, I never have.

S: Can you physically describe the interior of the Oldest City Group location at 144 King St. Now it's an Art Gallery so it is hard to envision.



The coffee was way in the back. There was a podium on the right. I can remember sitting in front of the podium and someone had handwritten a whole list of our assets and our liabilities. I would look at that every week and it would have fear, anger, resentment and on the other side faith, hope, trust. It was quite extraordinary. Someone had taken a lot of time, and it was a really big poster. It was a long list on both sides. I remember thinking of that when I was doing my fourth step and thinking I have no idea what strengths and weaknesses are now. It took me a lot of work with my sponsor to narrow that list down because I could say yes to everything or no to everything which didn't make any sense.

But the podium was there, and I was sitting in the front row and my ex-husband was speaking. He has a wonderful way of speaking. He has a beautiful, deep voice and is very well spoken. And he has a beautiful Southern accent. He was raised Baptist and I was raised Catholic. He is from Alabama and Florida and I am from New Jersey and Boston. We were kind of an interesting couple. He was speaking one of the first nights I was there. He said, "Good Evening. My name is Tom. I am an alcoholic and I am from Montgomery, Alabama." And a homeless person would come crashing in through the day, and he was just look and look back and patiently resume, "Hi, I am Tom and I am an alcoholic and I am from Montgomery, Alabama". And another guy would roll in off the street. I think he did that three or four times. He just has a funny way about him. That was my introduction to his sense of humor.

So, it was a very modest, modest room. It was not a great part of town then. I lived over on Cincinnati Avenue at the time, and I couldn't drive. So, I would ride my bike over.

I really had reluctantly moved to Florida against my better judgment but I had to get out of Boston. I was running away from my divorce. I can remember riding my bike over and parking outside the Oldest City and chaining it to a probably some kind of speed limit sign or something and looking up through a palm tree and seeing the full moon and thinking "that was beautiful". I was seeing the whole world through a new set of eyes.

S: So, you went to the Shamrock Group. Did you do the ladies group too because I know Oldest City and the Shamrock Group had a women's groups

ML: You know what. I was not into women at that time. I didn't learn to love women until I learned to love myself. So, I don't remember any of those women's meetings. The other meeting I do remember is but this is quite a few years later. This was after the kids were a little bit older, and we would take turns going to meetings. Tom would go to a night meeting and I would watch the kids and vice versa. And during those years, I would go to the Way Out Group which has always been at the Lutheran Church. Helen and Peter were kind of the leads. Sally, when were those two women's groups?

S: The Oldest City Ladies started in 1975. The Shamrock Ladies was in 1980, and it was at Grace Methodist Church.

ML: Those were probably daytime meetings. Isn't it funny? Now my favorite meetings are women's meetings.

S: What kinds of fun events did you guys have?

ML: What we did because the community was smaller, we partied at people's houses. We had sober parties. I can remember going to Ned P's house. We were young people with young children who would hang out together. The one big, big event was the Gratitude Dinner.

S: That was at the Rod and Gun for a while, right?

ML: Yes, but before that it was held at the Way Out spot, that Lutheran Church. It was there for several years. I can't remember where else it has been held. Those were fantastic. I spoke at one of those early on and shared way too much. That is how you learn.

S: You have had an incredible journey, and it is great.

ML: I have.

S: Thank you so much!

Thank You

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