



# NATURE COAST JOURNAL

JULY 2021



**JULY 18TH**

**Nature Coast Intergroup meets  
at 4:30pm**

**Followed by District Business  
Meeting at 5:45pm**

**@ Shepherd of the Hills  
Episcopal Church,  
2540 W. Norvell Bryant  
Highway (CR 486), Lecanto  
Service positions are open!**

*The following stories relate the experiences of Holly and Sam — both of whom are alcoholics coping with serious mental health issues — who have found sobriety and a new way of life in Alcoholics Anonymous. These stories are re-printed from the flyer AA For Alcoholics With Mental Health Issues, and are reprinted here to share their experience strength and hope.*

**Holly R.**

*"I was dismayed to realize I couldn't stop on my own."*

I always had difficulty figuring out why I was so different from others. There was more than just what was on the outside that set me apart. I struggled in school academically even though I tested with a high IQ. My friends were the honor students, but my GPA was low and I was always relieved I made it through another level in school. This became a source of discouragement, and I never felt I was capable or good enough. One of the ways I was able to excel was by rebelling, and experimenting with drugs and alcohol soon became an outlet for me to be at the head of the pack. Even the honor students and tech geeks liked to party, and I could keep pace with all of them. I still had aspirations for myself, though, and went off to college with a reserved sort of hope. The partying of college life was nothing new to *(continued on page 3)*

**HOTLINE 352-621-0599**

## *STEPS/TRADITIONS/CONCEPTS*

### Step 7

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings

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### Tradition 7

Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside

Contributions

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### Concept 7

The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness.

**“Definition of an alcoholic is an egomaniac with an inferiority complex”**



### **CONTRIBUTIONS**

#### **District 28**

P.O. Box 640914  
Beverly Hills, FL 34464

#### **Nature Coast Intergroup**

P.O. Box 2634  
Crystal River, FL 34423

#### **North Florida Area Conference**

(Please write District 28 and your group number on the check)

Make checks payable to NFAC and send to:

P.O. Box 10094  
Jacksonville FL 32247

#### **General Service Office**

P.O. Box 459  
Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163

*(continued from front page)*... me, but something was different. While my peers could party, still pass exams and make the grade, I couldn't. Having setbacks only encouraged my rebellion with alcohol and par-13 tying; it was the one social sphere where I didn't feel "less than." Falling behind and being on my own, I made my own rules, which meant that I began to find people who kept pace with my drinking and partying. I became involved with a dangerous group, and this changed the direction my life would take. I got kicked out of school; I was losing jobs and drinking vodka straight from the bottle 'round the clock. I was dismayed to realize I couldn't stop on my own. It would take several years of drinking this way before I was ready to ask for help. By the grace of God, one day I was simply on my knees, broken and desperate, and willing to do whatever it took to have some freedom from addiction. I entered a rehab program where the lead doctor told me it was possible to be "too smart" for A.A. I knew this was meant ironically, and I was just desperate enough to realize I had to hold onto what I was being given through the program, and to try the suggestions if I wanted to stay sober one day at a time. If I overanalyzed something or failed to connect with the people who shared their experience, strength and hope, I could miss the whole point of why I landed where I did and what I wanted to change. Slowly, day by day, my head began to clear, and staying sober and going to meetings began to get easier. I had some expectation that when I was able to stop drinking I would magically pull my life back together, and that aspirations I had held dear would begin to materialize. The problem was that I was still the same person — a girl who couldn't quite manage as well as everyone else. Even working the Steps and clearing away the wreckage of the past didn't solve that problem for me. Years passed when I would be bouncing between jobs, not managing to get back into school, and becoming more and more discouraged again. At one point a friend of mine who had been in the program for years with me, and who had a fondness for therapy, suggested I seek outside help. I remember her saying, "It's not normal what you're dealing with, and it's not a big deal to get help." I hadn't realized how I had stigmatized therapy and mental health conditions up until then, but I saw clearly that she was right. I began to see a therapist I came to enjoy seeing as much as I enjoyed my A.A. meetings, and I took her suggestion to be tested by a psychiatrist. 14 When I returned with a diagnosis of ADHD and a depressive episode, things began to make sense. It became clear that ADHD's effect on my work, school and even social skills had the effect of causing discouragement and depression. For so long my solution had been to drink the problems away. And, while sober, I didn't have to drink one day at a time, but I was still struggling. When I opened myself up to outside help, I began to develop solutions to the core problem that had been plaguing me for years. Since that time, I have managed to transfer back into a major university. I look forward to studying abroad next summer and applying to graduate school next fall. Although my grades will never be perfect, I have a confidence in my ability as an independent woman that I hadn't known was possible. I'm forever grateful to A.A. for giving me the tools to know when to ask for help and the courage to be open and honest.

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## Sam

*"If I stay involved in A.A. and take great care of my mental health, I flourish spiritually, personally and professionally."*

"Normal people don't act this way," I said to myself, waking up in a crummy hotel room in a neighboring state. I had taken the four-hour drive there alone the night before, under the influence of course, but also with the help of rocket fuel energy from one of the most extreme manic episodes I had ever experienced. Yes, I am one of millions of Americans who suffer from mood disorders, and like nearly a quarter of my mood disordered brethren, I abuse alcohol like it's my job. And in the last couple of years I have come to learn that, untreated, I could become a much more morose statistic. I was diagnosed three years prior to stepping 20 foot inside an A.A. meeting. Anytime my love of getting loaded started interfering with my life, doctors would suggest that I check out the program or at least cut back on my drinking. But I knew better. I said to myself, "I am already going (*continued on page 4*)..."

... (continued from page 3)... to a psychiatrist once a month, blabbering to a therapist three times a week, and taking medication. I'm doing enough work already. Besides, alcohol isn't my problem, my mood disorder is what's destroying my life." In the meantime, I was definitely not stable and was drinking every day and often alone. It was hard for me to notice it then, but booze interacted with my mood disorder in dangerous ways. If I was already feeling depressed, a bottle of Scotch would make me feel like I was drowning in suicidal thoughts. But if I was feeling that exhilarating and lethal elevation, getting loaded would be like pouring gasoline over my mania and make me even angrier, more reckless, and generally not a pleasant guy to be around. And it seemed like if I wasn't already high or low, alcohol was pushing me one way or the other anyway. It wasn't until later that I realized that my extracurricular substance intake was basically voiding out the positive effects of the prescribed medication I was on. Above all, I was spiritually sick. I thought I was God (sometimes literally) and that the most important person in the world was me. My instability and my compulsive drinking kept me separate from the rest of the world and any power greater than me. But when I finally got out of that hotel bed and got myself to a meeting, I found out what had been missing from my life. From the moment I got my butt in a seat until now, I have felt nothing but welcomed by my fellows in the program. No one ever called me gross, evil or crazy — things that I thought I had become. I found a power greater than myself, and it was in a huge network of alcoholics that taught me the importance of service and cleaning one's side of the street. Yes, for me G.O.D. often still stands for Group Of Drunks. It's no surprise that when I stopped drinking my medication started working and I became stable. But it goes both ways — I need to stay sober in order to stay stable, but I also need to stay stable in order to keep my sobriety sound. The Promises didn't start coming true for me until I immersed myself in the Twelve Steps with a sponsor and educated myself on my mood disorder. My recovery is contingent on going to meetings, service and fellowship, but it is also nonexistent if I don't keep up with therapy and take my medication as prescribed by my psychiatrist. There have been times in my sobriety when I have leaned heavily on one thing and let up on the rest, and the results have been nasty. On the other hand, if I stay involved in A.A. and take great care of my mental health, I flourish spiritually, personally and professionally. The only way to stay balanced is to try to keep balance in the things we can control and pray for guidance when it comes to the things we can't. The fact of the matter is that today alcohol is not my problem, and neither is my mood disorder. Chaos is my problem, and I am addicted to it — probably because it is what I am used to most: after all, I spent the first 23 years of my life doing things like waking up in other states. But in the short time that I have been taking care of myself, there have been moments when I have seen the sunlight of the Spirit. And I am not exaggerating when I say that those moments saved my life. I keep coming back because I know that my life depends on it

## **WE NEED YOUR STORIES!**

Tell us about "what it was like, what happened and what it is like now."

In upcoming issues, Nature Coast Journal will publish your brief stories about:

Laughter and Fun in Sobriety, Balance in and out of AA, The Steps,

Living Your Dreams In Sobriety, AA Humor/ Jokes

Send us stories on any topic sobriety

related!

e-mail: [news@ncintergroup.com](mailto:news@ncintergroup.com)

# A.A HISTORY

## A Letter From Bill Wilson About The Use Of The Lord's Prayer At A.A. Meetings April 14, 1959

Dear Russ,

Am right sorry for my delay in answering. Lois and I were a long time out of the country and this was followed by an attack of the marathon type of flu that has been around here in New York. We are okay now, however, but I did want to explain my delay.

Now about the business of adding the Lord's Prayer to each A.A. meeting.

This practice probably came from the Oxford Groups who were influential in the early days of A.A. You have probably noted in AA. Comes of Age what the connection of these people in A.A. really was. I think saying the Lord's Prayer was a custom of theirs following the close of each meeting. Therefore it quite easily got shifted into a general custom among us.

Of course there will always be those who seem to be offended by the introduction of any prayer whatever into an ordinary A.A. gathering. Also, it is sometimes complained that the Lord's Prayer is a Christian document. Nevertheless this Prayer is of such widespread use and recognition that the arguments of its Christian origin seems to be a little farfetched. It is also true that most A.A.s believe in some kind of God and that communication and strength is obtainable through His grace. Since this is the general consensus it seems only right that at least the Serenity Prayer and the Lord's Prayer be used in connection with our meetings. It does not seem necessary to defer to the feelings of our agnostic and atheist newcomers to the extent of completely hiding our light under a bushel.

However, around here, the leader of the meeting usually asks those to join him in the Lord's Prayer who feel that they would care to do so. The worst that happens to the objectors is that they have to listen to it. This is doubtless a salutary exercise in tolerance at their stage of progress.

So that's the sum of the Lord's Prayer business as I recall it. Your letter made me wonder in just what connection you raise the question.

Meanwhile, please know just how much Lois and I treasure the friendship of you both. May Providence let our paths presently cross one of these days.

Devotedly yours,  
Bill Wilson  
WGW/ni Mr. Russ

**From the A.A. Archives in New York**



## PROGRAM & ACTIVITIES

- Family Workshops ■ Young People Meeting ■ Golf Tournament  
 ASL Interpreting ■ LGBTQ Meetings ■ 5k Run/Walk  
 Ice Cream Socials ■ Dances and Entertainment ■ Marathon Meetings  
 Spanish Speaking Meetings ■ Grapevine ■ Archives Room  
 Old Timers Meeting ■ Meditation Meetings ■ Al-Anon  
 Convention Merchandise ■ Photo ops with our CoFounders Bill & Dr. Bob ■ Yoga



### Guest Speakers:

- Steve V. - Jacksonville, FL  
 Heather G. - Louisville, KY  
 Polly P. - Jacksonville, FL  
 June G. - Los Angeles, CA  
 Robyn G. (AFG) - Winston-Salem, NC  
 Ron B. - Riverview, FL  
 Charlie C. - Los Angeles, CA  
 Ken D. - Los Angeles, CA

### Host Hotel Information

**Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverside**  
 225 East Coastline Dr. ■ Jacksonville, Florida 32202  
 (904) 588-1234 ■ 1-800-492-8804

<https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/group-booking/JAXRJ/G-AAFL>

#### Rates:

Standard King/Double \$134.00

Suites \$149.00 to \$259.00

Discount Rate Code: G-AAFL

Rates will be honored 3 days before and 3 days after the convention dates, based on availability.

*All rooms are subject to state and local taxes.*

#### This Hotel Is Non-smoking

*Designated smoking areas will be provided.*

*Advance Deposit of first night's room and tax are due at time of reservation.*

Check-in 3 P.M. — Check-out 12 P.M.

Parking Rates: \$12/day Self Parking

\$17/day Valet Parking

# JULY 2021 ANNIVERSARIES

## Real Happy Hour

**Gloria T. 39 years**

**Dave B 6 years**

## Sober Sand Gnats

**John P. 26 years**

**Sue P. 16 years**

**Debbie O. 3 years**

