Plain & Straight

January 2026

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PANIC AT THE MAYFLOWER HOTEL

In May 1935, Bill Wilson, founder of AA, demoralized at the end of a failed business trip found himself in the lobby of the Mayflower Hotel fearing that he might take a drink and destroy his hard-earned sobriety. His sense of what he needed to prevent his return to drinking was not to reach out to a professional, but to find another alcoholic with whom he could talk. A series of phone calls led him to Dr. Bob Smith who was at that time struggling with his own alcoholism. Their growing friendship, mutual support and vision of helping other alcoholics marked the formal ignition of AA as a social movement. The date of Dr. Bob Smith's last drink in June of 1935 is celebrated as AA's founding date. Soon after that last drink, Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith began the search for AA number three.

The mutual discovery that Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith could achieve together what they had failed to achieve alone became the glue that held AA together. The discovery that the gift of sobriety could only be retained by giving it to others rose to consciousness in these earliest days of AA. The call from the Mayflower Hotel was the first incident in AA history in which an alcoholic picked up a telephone rather than a drink, affirming the potential of replacing dependence upon a drug with interdependence between members of a recovering community. This event also set the basic relationship within AA as one in which no member could claim moral superiority over another.

There are several aspects of this early encounter that distinguish it from other relationships intended to help the alcoholic. Facing the most severe test of his early sobriety, Wilson sensed that he needed, not professional counseling, but the union that comes from shared experience and mutual vulnerability. The Wilson-Smith relationship was voluntary as opposed to coerced and reciprocal. It was personal as opposed to paid. This start of AA and the concept of meetings is a key part of recovery.

"Happy New Year from all of us at District 1 Archives"

Living In Recovery:
Attitude of Gratitude

by Renee B.

I remember the first time I heard someone introduce themselves as a "grateful recovering alcoholic". I thought, "Are they crazy?" Why in the world would anyone be grateful to be an alcoholic. I wouldn't wish this disease on my worst enemy." As someone who grew up taking a lot of my blessings (loving parents, good education, comfort and security) for granted, I very rarely took the time to express my appreciation or gratitude for anything. It never crossed my mind that there might be other people in my community who didn't have the things that I had. The only time that gratitude showed up on my radar was during Thanksgiving. As my consumption of alcohol began to increase, my selfish, egocentric behavior followed. Everything that I thought and did was about meeting my needs. I believed that I was entitled to have what I wanted when I wanted it.

" Allowing myself to see my present in the context of my past helped me to see how much worse it could have been if I hadn't stopped drinking. "

I realize now that when I was drinking, I was living in a fantasy world to avoid having to face the realities of life. When I made the decision to get and stay sober, I knew that I had finally have to remove the "rose-colored glasses" that had kept me in a state of denial and self-delusion. I started to see the world for what it really was – broken, painful, and messy. I experienced stressful situations in the workplace, I struggled with trying to repair broken relationships, I felt alone and disconnected from my community, and I worried about my health and my finances. Since I could no longer drink over these things, I wasn't sure how I was supposed to cope. I knew that if I wanted to have any chance of success in sobriety, I would have to learn how to change my perspective.

My sponsor suggested that I get into the habit of making a gratitude list every day. I was told that as alcoholics we are predisposed to fear, excessive worry and self-pity. If I sat in those emotions long enough, my chances of picking up a drink would increase. Before I came into the rooms of AA, I was in survival mode. In the early days, I was grateful for the bare necessities of life. I had food to eat, a warm bed to sleep in, clean clothes to wear, and a job. Allowing myself to see my present in the context of my past helped me to see how much worse it could have been if I hadn't stopped drinking. The longer I stayed sober, my ability to notice and appreciate the blessings in my life improved. As my gratitude lists became longer, my faith became stronger. I became convinced that my Higher Power was providing for me in ways that I did not deserve or expect. Practicing gratitude regularly helps me to find the blessing or the lesson even during adversity. Sometimes, I really must make a concerted effort to recognize the purpose of the pain. With the help of my Higher Power, I can see that the uncomfortable circumstances that I find myself in are meant to shed light on those defects of character that need attention and correction. When I can view a situation from this perspective, it is much easier for me to be grateful for it because I know that there is personal growth on the other side. That is a gift, even though it may not feel like at the time.

At my home group, we begin every meeting with people sharing what they are grateful for. The common theme for most is that they are grateful for their sobriety. They acknowledge that without it they would not be able to have families and friends to enjoy, healthy lifestyles to cherish, and opportunities to become better versions of themselves. I have heard it said that a "grateful heart doesn't find it necessary to pick up a drink". I think there is some truth to that. When I start my day with a positive attitude, I am less likely to let life's little annoyances bother me. Finding ways to remain positive even when I am not feeling very hopeful or optimistic is always my goal in recovery.

Saturday Night Bonfire Group

January

Jess 4

Shaun H. 7

Blind Pass Group

December

Zach 20

Keith 2

New Women for Sobriety

November

April 8

Michelle B. 17

Norma 33

Attitude Adjustment

December

Florence 27

Lynn. 19

Suzanne. 11

Christine 36

Attitude Adjustment

December

Jim 25

New Beginnings Woman's Group

December

Janie 31

January

Heather M, 15

Marge, 33

February

Karin, 25

Kerri, 4

ars

Leslie, 36

Ladies Beach Serenity Group

December

Jim 25

New Beginnings Woman's Group

December

Janie 31

January

Heather M, 15

Marge, 33

February

Karin, 25

Kerri, 4

ars

Leslie, 36

Ladies Beach Serenity Group

December

Janet R. 7

Amy H. 1

January

Cheryl R 39

Linda K 37

February

Karin, 25

Kerri, 4

Leslie, 36

Seminole Group

December

Chris Ross- 1 yr

Coleman - 2 yrs

Chris R. - 3 yrs

Blind Pass Group

December

Dianna 4

Fran L. 5

2250

December

Patti E 44

Ray B. 40

Molly M. 18

Mary C 18

Jennifer K. 16

Jessica B. 8

Nick D. 8

Amanda E. 8

Steve M. 4

Justine. 2

Makayla M. 1

Spirit Group

December

Paul D 16

Virginia M 27

Linda G 33

Patty S 40

Beach Bunch

December

Don H 40

Tricia P 40

St. Pete Group

January

Brad E. 6 years
Shae 1 year
Bill P. 3 years
Chris H. 26 years
Kelly 2 years
Kerry 44 years
Robby 2 years

Blind Pass Group

December

Gary 49
Brandon 19

Ozona

December

JD 1
Jen 2
Peter 4
Tiffany 2
Rob 4
Dianne 14
Bob H 37

The 49ers Group

December

Gina L 11
Pam V 9
Boyd 12
Cath B 20
Pat B 5
John H 18

The After Work Bunch

December

Claire D 32
Jimmie K 31
Van L 18
Donna C 17
Lee M 15
Chris W 7
Kathleen K 7
Chuck M 3
Everton D 1
Jodi O 14

High Noon Daily

December

Beverly G. 48 yrs
Don C 2 yrs
Mike J. 2 yrs
Morgan 1 yr

Saturday Night Bonfire

January

Jess 4
Shaun H. 8

GOYA

December

Glenn S 7
Pam V 9
Barb G 11
Bella F 15
Phyllis C 17
Robert L 24

Design For Living

December

Coleman 2
Patrick C. 38
Bret S. 13

Central Group

December

Tracey V 35
Jennifer C 29

Upcoming EVENTS

THE SERENITY CLUB
631 Turner Street
Clearwater, FL 33756

- **MEMBERSHIP DUES** -The Serenity Club is owned & operated by its members. Participate in the operations of the club. Be a club member!
- **RENOVATION FUNDRAISER** - Please help –donate in the can located in the coffee bar.
- **BOOK FUNDRAISER** – Located in the coffee bar. Donate or purchase gently used books.
- **CAN DRIVE** - Please donate any aluminum cans in the designated containers.

BREAKFAST FUNDRAISER	SATURDAY	JANUARY 10th
MONTHLY CAR WASH	SATURDAY	JANUARY 10th
SERENITY CLUB BOARD MEETING	WEDNESDAY	JANUARY 14th
MONTHLY BAKE SALE	SATURDAY	JANUARY 17th
MEMBER OUTREACH EVENT	SATURDAY	JANUARY 17th
MOVIE NIGHT	FRIDAY	JANUARY 23rd
SANDRA D PAINT THERAPY	SATURDAY	JANUARY 24th
ONEBLOOD-BLOOD DRIVE	MONDAY	JANUARY 26th

FLYERS FOR ALL EVENTS ARE LOCATED IN THE COFFEE BAR

THE COFFEE BAR ATTENDANTS ARE VOLUNTEERS.
THEY VOLUNTEER THEIR TIME TO SERVE

Oldsmar Group meets at Community United Methodist Church at 207 E Buckingham Ave in Oldsmar.
Spoke on 12/13. Basket $ TBA

Sally SD 11/29/24 "Dad passed of sclerosis of the liver in my teens. In 2019, I moved to Tampa, and I had no off button. I came in and got a sponsor. I am now a member with service commitments."
Brian "I was working at home, and drinking at home. The alcoholism started progressing. Woke up one morning and called a work associate who was sober. Went to first meeting, admitted I was an alcoholic. Then started ZOOM meetings. Now I am back to live meetings, and being a part of, and taking people through the steps."

Attitude Adjustment meets at 7am Mon thru Sat at 1812 Highland Ave at Grace Lutheran Church in Clearwater. Spoke on 12/20. 75 in attendance. Basket $79.
"It's the best way to start your day"
Suzanne SD 12/22/14 "I did the 90/90 days. My husband has Parkinson's disease. I'm sticking beside him right now. My sons are 31 & 29. They want their mom to go to an open house, and they want to have coffee on Sundays."
"Find some gratitude. Without gratitude, I can't grow, and without you, I can't do this alone."

Florence SD 12/6/98 "If you don't take the first drink, you can't get drunk. Once you pick up that first drink, your body cannot stop drinking, but if you don't pick up a drink, you don't have to get drunk."
"I got to the point where that drinking was not doing anything for me anymore, the way it did in the beginning. I was able to get to a 10am meeting on the way into work, and then I went right to a meeting after work."
"I start my day with AA, and I end my day with AA."
"When I was 10 years sober, I crawled into the doors of Al-Anon, because of my co-dependency, and we probably wouldn't be together if I hadn't gone to Al-Anon. My priority is AA, b/c if I pick up a drink, my life is gonna change drastically; if I don't do Al-Anon, my life won't change as drastically, as a drink."

Back Porch Breakfast Bunch meets at 7am, noon, 5:30 & 8pm in Winn Dixie Shopping Plaza at 2480 E Bay Dr Ste# 30, in Largo.
Spoke on 12/27. 74 in attendance. Basket $85.

Bruce SD 5/9/22
"They said you've got to lose your engineering background b/c you can't solve the alcohol problem with engineering."
"Why did this happen to me? Well, it really didn't happen to me, it happened to her, because I'm still alive."
"Before I ever understood the whole concept of God or a HP, I actually had one looking after me, because I had a few fender benders."
"Serenity Comes From the Fellowship. When you need help, get to meetings. 30/30 Show up 30 minutes early, and stay 30 minutes after. Talk to someone, and do some listening."
Frank SD 7/1/25 "I am very grateful for AA. It saved my life. I lived alone, I drank alone. I speak German better than English. My first language is German. I had an adjustment coming to America. I never fit in anywhere."
"I had 9 years sober, in NJ. The program does work, and I took my own will back, I took my pride and ego back. One day I decided to go back out. Public intoxication. I got on my knees, and prayed, and it worked, and when I got out, the first place I went was the Back Porch."
"I'm really a shy guy. Spirit of death, ego of a shadow. Sometimes I am T.M.I. I have to swallow my pride, and ask for help."
"Step dad-I always fought w/ him, and it was always a battle of self-will and pride, outspoken, sarcastic, and self-centered."
"I had a chance to look at myself, my patterns, and stay int...."
"We live in the center of the Serengetti-predators, the lions, and the tigers. A year ago, no family, and now I've a new family. A year ago, no hugs, and now I am addicted to Alcoholics Anonymous. We have a common denominator, it's called Alcoholics Anonymous. The 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. This is the best show in town."
Maryanne "God brought me to AA, and AA brought me to God." I call it an illumination of conscience-ness, it was God Almighty doing an intervention. The way God works is amazing, and is unique to each individual."
"Even though I was not living right for a very, very long time, and bad decisions. God still loved me. God was there the whole time, like, you can make it."

Lynn "If you don't have a home group, you should try us out. We are family."

CONDENSED LETTER FROM GSO

Dear A.A. Friends, *November 26, 2025*

Warm greetings from the General Service Office. As we reflect during this season of gratitude, we are reminded that Alcoholics Anonymous exists to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers—and that mission depends on the continued support of the Fellowship.

In 2024, your generosity lifted GSO out of serious financial difficulty. Contributions reached the highest level on record, allowing us to continue providing the essential services that support A.A. worldwide. Unfortunately, in 2025 we are again facing a significant and concerning decline in contributions.

As of September 30, 2025:

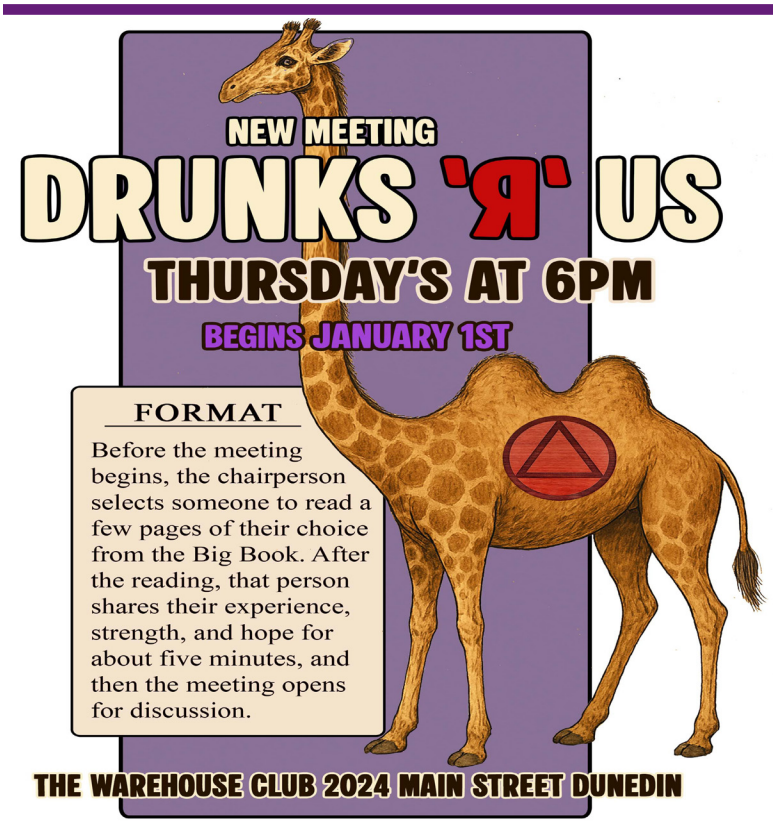
- *Total contributions are $1,018,000 less than last year and $843,000 below budget.*
- *While net income from literature sales is $104,000 higher than last year, overall income from contributions and literature combined is still $914,000 less than last year and $617,000 below budget.*
- *Operating expenses have been carefully managed and remain $394,000 under budget, yet the operating surplus has fallen to $124,971, compared to $1,176,000 at the same time last year.*
- *The Reserve Fund currently covers 6.2 months of operating expenses, a level that requires close attention.*

Despite strong budget discipline and long-term cost controls, declining contributions and reduced net income from literature sales continue to place vital services at risk. The ability of GSO, AAWS, and the General Service Board to fulfill the Fellowship's requests_toggle_start—conference services, literature support, public information, international outreach, and more—depends directly on sustained financial support.

When A.A. has faced moments like this in the past, the Fellowship has responded—and that response has made all the difference. If your group is able, we urgently ask you to consider making a special contribution to the General Service Board.

Thank you for all you do in service to Alcoholics Anonymous and for helping ensure that the hand of A.A. is always there for the alcoholic who still suffers.

With gratitude,
Bob W.
General Manager, GSO



The San Martin Group

MONTHLY SUNDAY BREAKFAST
Happens Every Third Sunday

Join us this month, Sunday, June 15th
FULL BREAKFAST BUFFET @ 11:00
MEETING @ Noon ~ Fellowship After
All are served, $2.00 Donation Requested
"If you don't have $2 Bucks,
bring someone with $4!!

GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS

Send Checks to: Pinellas County Intergroup: 9011 Park Blvd., Suite 206, Seminole, FL 33777

DECEMBER 2025

Into Action	50.00
Clearwater Group/301	50.00
KOINONIA Group	100.00
Walsingham Group	20.00
Free Spirits Group	75.00
DOWNTOWN SERENITY SISTERS	60.00
AA By The Sea Group	250.00
New Freedom / New Happiness	186.00
Individual	75.00
On Awakening	200.00
Sober Squad	100.00
Forty Niners Group	44.19
Eastlake Group	175.00
Feelings Group	247.35
Progress Not Perfection Group	90.00
Sunrise Alano Beach Club	80.00
A Work In Progress Group	48.00
At The End Of The Rainbow	541.88
New Beginnings Womens Group	400.00
Off Your Chest	150.00
Friendly's	65.00
Clearview of the Big Book	25.00
A New Start	50.00
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	**$3,082,42**

Where & When MEETINGS

444: Closed Meeting: M,T,W,Th, F @4pm – this meeting is no longer in existence, we honor the completion of this sacred space.

A Power Greater Than Ourselves: Monday @4pm – this meeting is no longer in existence, we honor the completion of this sacred space.

Wheel Of Recovery: Wednesdays @8pm – this meeting is no longer in existence, we honor the completion of this sacred space.

Serenity at Sunrise: Changed from @8am to 7am because of the sun.

No More Isolation: ALL MEETINGS TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED UNTIL MARCH 2026

Beach Bunch: Has moved 1507 Bay Palm Blvd Indian Rocks Beach, FL 33785

Get Lit(erature): Is now officially **Get Lit!** in the W&W and Online.