

HISTORY OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IN GLYNN, MCINTOSH AND WAYNE COUNTIES, GEORGIA (DISTRICT 3 ZONES A AND D)

When researching the history of AA in Glynn and surrounding counties, we discovered that it is somewhat of an inexact science. Since our program depends for its existence on a membership that lives anonymously only one day at a time, there is not much of a sense of history. Many of our early members have left this earth for bigger and better things, and unfortunately much of our recorded history has died with them. So our only source of information comes from our old timers, whose memories may have dimmed with time.

With this in mind we have set upon the task of gathering information from the past from various sources, and encouraging current members to record our history as it unfolds.

The following is a document in progress. We encourage anyone with more information or knowledge to add to or amend what we have gathered here.

1966 - Answering Service and Newspaper Ad: In 1966, T.C. Hope and others hired an answering service for AA and began publishing a newspaper ad in the Brunswick News classified section: "If you want to drink, that's your business. If you want to stop, that's ours. Alcoholics Anonymous: 265-0892".

1972 - Alco Service Club: In the late Fall of 1972, T.C. and others formed the Alco Service Club and purchased an old two story house at 1212 Union Street. They considered the address a "sign from God" that this place was meant to be the AA meeting place. When the house was ready, the Brunswick Group began to meet there (Tuesday and Friday nights) and invited the Big Book Group to join them. (Thursday night and Sunday morning) The Coastal Group eventually began meeting there also.

1973 - Coastal Area Clinic: In 1973, the State of Georgia opened a detox center in Brunswick: the Coastal Area Clinic. The clinic physician was Dr. Roy Thagard, a member of the Big Book Group, The clinic provided an ideal gathering place for AA members to "12 Step" alcoholics. For many years, Dr. Roy gave lectures on alcoholism at the Alco Service Club on Monday nights.

1973 - Georgia Regional Hospital Meetings: In 1973, Don L. and several other AA members began carrying an AA meeting to the patients at Georgia Regional Hospital in Savannah every Monday night. This lasted for eight years.

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1980 - Alco Service Club Burns: On Sunday September 6, 1980, a smoldering cigarette in a waste basket caused a fire that burned the house on Union Street to the ground, and the groups were without a place to meet. They quickly found an empty store front on Newcastle Street, salvaged a few chairs and a coffee pot, and held a meeting two nights later.

1981 - New Alco Club Opens: While they were meeting in the temporary place, the Club board searched for a new clubhouse. They settled on the old Mose Daniels Plumbing Company building on Stonewall St., next to the Piddler's Antique Shop. The building was purchased and renovated by a few AA members. The Club opened on February 14, 1981.

1982 – Intergroup Established: By 1982, there were nine groups in Glynn County and the need was apparent for coordination of many areas of service work. Up until that time, the Brunswick Group had been solely responsible for paying the answering service and newspaper ads, and it was time for the other groups to share the responsibility. Don L. requested a meeting to discuss the possibility of forming an Intergroup was held at the Alco Service Club, with approximately 40 people in attendance. The group voted to form an Intergroup, and the Glynn County Intergroup was born. The groups began contributing toward paying for the newspaper classified ad and the answering service fees, and began to publish a meeting schedule and a newsletter. PI/CPC, Institutional and other Committees were formed to carry out 12 Step work.

1982 – District 3 Rezoned: In 1982, AA Area 16, District 3 included AA groups in nine counties, with a total of more than 15 groups. (McIntosh County was in District 5 - Savannah, although it was closer to Brunswick.)

Don L. was the DCM at that time, and put in a motion at the Assembly to have the District Rezoned, requesting that McIntosh County be included in District 3, and dividing the District into three zones. The motion was voted on at the Assembly and District 3 was divided into: **Zone A** (Glynn, McIntosh and Wayne), **Zone B:** (Brantley, Charlton and Camden), and **Zone C:** (Ware Atkinson and Clinch).

NOTE: By 2006 there were 30 groups in Zone A (Glynn, McIntosh and Wayne) so Arthur M., DCM, requested re-zoning, and **Zone D** was created (St. Simons and Jekyll Island)

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1986 – 1212 Club (Cate Road) Opens: Groups that had been meeting at the “Forks” lost their meeting place, and began looking for a meeting place. Several members formed the 1212 Service Club and bought some property on Cate Rd. An old house was moved to the property and renovated by AA members. The 1212 Club opened for “business” in the Fall of 1985. The Today Group, Golden Isles Group and Third Step Group moved their meetings to the new clubhouse.

2001 – The Clubhouse – St. Simons Opens: In 2000 Frank B. began negotiating with the County Commissioners to obtain permission to use the Boy Scout building on St. Simons for AA meetings. Permission was obtained, and the Clubhouse Board of Directors was formed. The first AA meeting was held there in 2001.

GROUP HISTORIES:

1948 (APPROX.) - BRUNSWICK GROUP

Brunswick AA began in the late 40's or early 50's, probably by an airplane pilot named George Perry, and some of his friends. Born in Helen, Georgia, Perry spent his adult years in Brunswick, where he became a self-taught pilot and businessman. He died in 1974, at the age of 61, when the plane he was flying crashed into a hillside near Birmingham, Ala. (NOTE: Perry still holds the World Record for landing the biggest largemouth bass ever caught. He caught the bass in 1932 at the age of 20 in Telfair County, Georgia.) With him died the details of his famous catch.

Some time in the early 1990's, Perry's sister, who worked at the Glynn County Court House, found records that Perry had kept during the early days of AA in Brunswick. There were logs – similar to flight logs – detailing the 12-Step calls made by early members, as well as other information about AA. The records were given to J.T. G, who purportedly gave them to the Brunswick Group. Unfortunately, we can find no one who is aware of the whereabouts of those records.

The Brunswick Group met in various places in its early days, including an old building in Arco on Norwich Street, upstairs in the Zell Building on Newcastle Street, and St. David's Episcopal Church. It eventually became the first group to meet in the newly formed Alco Service Club meeting place at 1212 Union St. in 1972. It met there until the building burned, and then moved to the new Alco Club on Stonewall St. (now Martin Luther King Blvd.) Some of the early members were George P, T.C. H, and Maxine H.

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1962 – WAYNE COUNTY GROUP (JESUP)

AA was started in Jesup in 1962 by Lex B. Attempts had been made earlier – as early as 1948 - by Aubrey A. to establish AA in Wayne County.

In 1960, GSO received a letter from Lex B. asking to be registered as a loner till he could get a group started in Jesup. In June 1961, Lex wrote GSO saying: “I am happy to let you know that a group is forming here in Jesup. Bill P. and I have been meeting now for about 2 weeks. Our first meeting was in a drugstore over coffee and coke. Our second meeting was at my house over coffee and our third was with another alcoholic at his place. And last Thursday we met at the same place. We have three of us now and are going to meet every Monday and Thursday at 8:00. Our third member is L. Mc. We are going to meet at his place until we have enough money to rent a place in Jesup. We have put an ad in the paper, but we have mail going to General Delivery. We can’t get a box number as yet.

Later in June GSO wrote Lex welcoming the group and telling him was registered.

In March, 1962, GSO got another letter from Rex. “Here I am a loner again here in Jesup. We had a small group going here, but it seems that I am the only admitted alcoholic left. I’ve been thinking that this loner’s meeting is for me, and I intend to keep it up if we ever do have a meeting place here. I get to AA meetings maybe once a month. I go to Brunswick, which is 40 miles away” GSO discontinued the group listing and returned Lex to loner status.

In November 1962, Lex notified GSO that the Jesup group had started, with Lex as secretary.

The meeting was held on Wednesday nights, first at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, then at the County Health Department. In 1976 they moved to the “old Tastee Freeze”, where they continue to meet.

The group now has at least 2 meetings a day, some of which are non smoking.

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1965 (APPROX) ST. SIMONS GROUP (ST. SIMONS)

The Brunswick Group was the first AA group in Glynn County. It had several regular attendees who were still drinking and were loud and disruptive. In the early 1960's some of the members formed the St. Simons Island Group in order to escape that rowdiness. Quickly they were jokingly dubbed "The Silk Stockings Group" by the Brunswick Group's remaining members.

The St. Simons Island Group was the first on the Island. They met on Monday night in a real estate office on Ocean Boulevard for over a year before moving across the street to the Methodist Church.

By 1968 there were several members including the ones who started the group: Ray H., Raymond B., Kay Kay P., Beanie H, Mary L., Brownie B., Mary H., Bill M., Jean G., Ken ?, and Paul H. Initially, wooden chips were awarded to mark time of sobriety.

In 1978 the church invoked a no-smoking rule so Rosemary H., George M., and Mary G. established a new group. Mary, in her eighties and with a year of sobriety, named it the Goodwill Group.

This group met in Myrtle Lee's Beauty Salon in Longview Shopping Center and in 1978 moved to the First Presbyterian Church. In 1979 the St. Simons Island Group also moved there. One group met on Mondays and the other on Thursdays. Shortly the two groups merged and assumed the name St. Simons Island Goodwill Group.

About 1986 they started a noon meeting at the Chamber of Commerce facility in the Village. When the Clubhouse opened in 2001 this meeting moved and still meets there.

Meanwhile, the group held A Friday Noon 11th Step study meeting, the Seekers Group, which existed for a short time in the mid 1990's. Started by Robert W., it met first in the Chamber of Commerce facility in the Village, then in the St. Simons United Methodist Church.

Today, in 2007, the group has the three meetings and a membership of over 50 alcoholics. (NOTE: This is from the memories of Jean G., Rosemary H., Raymond B., Betty C. and from the 1995 book, "We Share Our Georgia Experience.")

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1968 – BIG BOOK GROUP (BRUNSWICK)

The Big Book Group originally was a Sunday morning breakfast meeting at the King and Prince Hotel, and later added a Thursday night meeting. The group met on Thursday nights at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, and then moved to the Alco Service Club on Union Street when it opened in 1973. They continued with the Sunday morning breakfasts at the clubhouse, after the King and Prince was no longer available.

Some of the early members were: Roy T, Lloyd G., Bill M., Chuck W. and Don L.

According to Chuck W. an in depth history of the group was recorded and was given to Lou L., who was secretary of the group at that time. Sadly, Lou passed away several years ago, and her husband Chuck died this past year. Unfortunately, the recorded history died with them, since attempts to locate it have been futile.

1969 - GOLDEN ISLES GROUP (BRUNSWICK)

The Golden Isles Group met in the Boy Scout club behind the First United Methodist Church, and then moved to St. David's on Altama. From there they moved to the "Forks", and finally to the 1212 Club on Cate Road.

The founding members were Ruth and Harvey B., Sherwood R., and Carl ?

1970 – JEKYLL ISLAND GROUP (JEKYLL ISLAND)

1977 – COASTAL GROUP (BRUNSWICK)

(No longer a group). Some of the original members were Jeanette and Bill G.

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1979 – THIRD STEP GROUP (BRUNSWICK)

On May 20, 1979, seven alcoholics got together in the living room of Francis D. and signed up that evening for the very first Third Step Group AA meeting. The following names were the seven founders of the group: Francis D., J. T. G., Herbert S., Charles M., Walter H, Vivian D., and Laura

Out of these seven members only two are alive today, J.T. and Francis D. The address of this first meeting place was 3327 Treville Ave., Brunswick, GA 31521. After a couple of months, the group moved to the old Forks building off of 341 and Old Jesup Rd. which many people know as the “Green Building”. The group grew and shortly after, the Golden Isle’s Group was formed and shared the building with the Third Step Group. A member named Fran and her husband donated a house on Cate Rd., which became the Twelve/Twelve Club. For quite a while, the Third Step Group was one of the largest groups in Glynn County.

On a sad note in the history of the group, on June 17, 1986, Charles Moore was shot and killed during a robbery. Others of the original members have died sober. Today Francis D. is still sober and works two jobs. With her permission, she says

she works at Rick’s Supermarket and is willing to talk to anyone interested in the history of the Third Step Group or anything else pertaining to AA. J.T. is still a member of the group and is an honorary member for other groups, especially the Today Group.

One bit of interest concerns the 90 day chip. The Third Step Group never had a 90 day chip, and Vivian and Francis D. went to a meeting in Homerville, GA and Vivian was celebrating her 90 days of sobriety. At the Homerville meeting they gave out 90 day chips that were silver; subsequently, the 90 day chip was born for the Third Step Group. Francis and Vivian brought back the concept of a 90 day chip; however, they didn’t have a silver one or money to get them (it wasn’t real silver, more like aluminum) so, Francis had her nephew Tommy (now an AA member!) paint chips silver!

So now you have a little history on the Third Step Group of Alcoholics Anonymous. We would love to have you add to our history if you have any information on our group that we are not aware of.

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1981 - DARIEN GROUP (MCINTOSH COUNTY)

There was one AA meeting in Darien around 1951. There is no information about who started it or how long it lasted. It seems it was started by someone in the Navy who was stationed at the Glynco Naval Air Base.

The first official AA meeting was held in McIntosh County in 1981. One of the founders of this group was Jim B. The meeting was held at the Baptist Church in Crescent for a while, then moved to Darien to the Presbyterian Church.

The Darien Group was kept going by Charlie A. until his illness and subsequent death. It was then taken up by Steve C. and other AA's and moved to the Parish Hall at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, where it meets on Sunday afternoons at 4:00.

1981 - FREDERICA GROUP (LATER CHANGED TO KEEP IT SIMPLE) ST. SIMONS

The Keep it Simple Group meets on Wednesdays and Fridays at the Clubhouse.

1982 - BACK TO BASICS GROUP (ST. SIMONS)

The Back to Basics Group originally met at Holy Nativity Church on St. Simons Island, and later moved to the Clubhouse.

1985 - TODAY GROUP (BRUNSWICK)

In 1982 the first day meeting in Brunswick was started because Hilton L. was trying to help Gene D. "sober up". This started a rapid growth of the 11:30 am day meeting.

By 1985, we were meeting six days a week (Monday through Saturday). Three meetings were held downtown at the Alco Club, and three were held on outskirts of Brunswick at the old "Forks"). Eventually, our meetings grew to about 25 people in attendance each day. But unfortunately, there was no group conscience or accounting for money collected in AA's name.

So, on March 13, 1985, Don L, Maxine H., Sue P., Paul H. and others started the "Today Group" at the old Forks location. The group was registered with GSO and began to contribute to the AA service structure.

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In May, the group moved to the “White House”, a place in north Glynn County where AA meetings were held for a while, before the Cate Road location was established. There the neighbors ran us out by going to the County Commissioners regarding “zoning” issues. We also found evidence of three fires that were started in attempts to burn us out.

From there we moved to the Pine Ridge Baptist Church for two months, then to Sue P.’s house. Finally, in the fall of 1985, we moved to the present location (1212 Club on Cate Road).

In 1991 the Today Group became the first non-smoking meeting in Brunswick, with the encouragement of Don L., Mike L. (who had just quit smoking) and others. The decision to go smoke free was met with much resistance by some AA’s, who thought that it would decrease attendance at the meetings. In reality, it had the opposite effect, and attendance increased.

Starting the first November of its existence, the group decided to have a “Tradition Study” month in November. This practice has continued to the present. Each day for the first two weeks in November, one Tradition is discussed.

1985 – TABBÝ HOUSE GROUP (ST. SIMONS)

In the summer of 1985, several members of the AA community met together and decided to form a new group on St. Simons Island which would be smoke-free. Even though smoke-free is the norm today, in the ‘80s most meetings were smoking meetings. After receiving permission from Rev. R., Superintendent of Epworth by the Sea, to use the old slave cabin called the Tabby House for meetings, the first meeting of the Tabby House Group was held on the first Sunday of October, 1985.

There were approximately fourteen people present who voted to hold regular open non-smoking meetings on Sunday nights at 8 PM. Bob W. was the first to be responsible for opening and closing the Tabby House, making coffee, setting up chairs and ordering literature, duties that were later assumed by Curtis A., our trusted servant until he died in late 2005.

That same week, the women’s meeting of the Tabby House Group began. Those present voted to make this a closed meeting for women only to be held on Wednesday nights. This meeting started as a smoking meeting, but was later changed to a non-smoking meeting. After the Clubhouse opened, the women’s

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meeting broke off from the Tabby House Group and formed their own group.

Several months after the women's meeting started, the men's meeting began on Tuesday nights. This was also a non-smoking meeting and continues to meet in the Tabby House today.

A few years later, Lou M., one of our part-time residents and a member of the Tabby House Group, was in town for a family wedding. He desperately needed a meeting, and Saturday morning was the only time he had available. So phone calls were quickly made, and a Saturday 7 AM meeting was hastily put together. It was so well received that the group of drunks met the next Saturday morning ... and the next Saturday morning ... and the next Saturday morning.. and so it continues today. After the Clubhouse opened, Allyn R. suggested we also include a Sunday 7 AM meeting. So we did. What started out as few in number has grown to become a well attended weekend must for a large group of Aaers.

In the summer months, the Tabby House Group enjoyed the serenity of the evening sunset visible through the large glass window overlooking the river. In the winter, Midge kept a fire blazing in the fireplace. When our numbers were large, people would be sitting on the stairs and in the loft area, and we knew sobriety was special.

In the mid-'90s, Epworth decided to make renovations to the building of the Tabby House. Just like layers of an onion, the more they pulled off, the more damage they found. It's a wonder that the building withstood our winter fires! So our meetings were moved around the Epworth property, eventually ending up at the museum, although the Tabby House building continued to be used for the annual Thanksgiving Retreat at Epworth which was hosted by two of our co-founders, Charlotte and Conway H. All the meetings except the men's moved to the Clubhouse when it opened, but Sunday night now meets at 7:30. The Tabby House building was still used for special occasions, however, such as our group's birthday celebration.

When the Tabby House Group was formed, the members agreed that haws group would make a special attempt to provide a loving and welcoming environment for all people walking through the door, whether visitors or regular members. Over the years, we have painfully felt the loss of many of our group as they moved or died, but this same philosophy continues.

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Story from the Tabby House Group:

A woman was driving from Minnesota to bury her father in Florida. She was crying all the way as she drove the over 1,000 miles to go from the Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico to pay her final respects to her dad. After a lifetime of not being responsible or being there for family, the AA program helped her to grow into being a responsible adult- How scary a thought was that? She was going to bury the man that gave her life. What an honor!

The sun was setting as she was heading south on I-95 crying and worrying about what she was about to be facing. To make the ride more bearable she was listening to several AA talks she had purchased or that had been given to her by friends. She heard this gentle, Southern voice invite the listeners to visit the world's best AA group the next time they were near Saint Simon's Island or Brunswick GA. The speaker said the "Tabby House Group" was his home group and that it met on Sunday evenings at the TABBY HOUSE inside Epworth-By-The-Sea Methodist Center at 7:30pm. The lady from Minnesota looked at her watch and at the I-95 EXIT sign and it read "Brunswick, Golden Isles, Saint Simons Island..." so she got off the interstate and followed the signs to Saint Simons.

The meeting had started already so she quietly took her seat and when the chairperson asked if anyone had a topic, was "new", or felt like taking a drink today, the woman responded by telling what had just happened to her on the highway and wanted to know if anyone at the meeting knew the speaker whose tape she had been listening to? She said his name was Conway.

Our grateful visitor was actually sitting right next to Conway H.,- the man whose voice and gentle words of invitation had led her to the Tabby House meeting that night. God's timing and the way He uses us was phenomenal. No one that was present that evening will ever forget the undeniable Presence of God that filled that old former slave cabin that night.

1995 – HAPPY HOUR GROUP (ST. SIMONS)

The Happy Hour was formerly just a meeting held at Holy Nativity Church on Mondays and Fridays at 5:45 p.m. The earlier time was for those wishing to attend a meeting before the traditional time of 8:00 p.m. and to fill the void many feel at this time of the day. A few of the regular attendees who felt they were doing all the work, held a special meeting to "encourage" others to do their part.

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After a much heated discussion, The Happy Hour Group was formed the following week along with a group conscience, sometime between 1994 & 1995. This was a good example of the old adage “many a group was started with a resentment and a coffee pot”!

Since that time, The Happy Hour Group has flourished and grown to be one of the larger attended meetings at The Clubhouse on St. Simons Island. All contributions received are sent quarterly to support GSO, GSSA, Georgia Prepaid, District and Intergroup on a percentage basis. Since there have been no actual records kept, we have had to rely solely on the memories of those of us who were there then and are here still.

1995 – EULONIA GROUP (MCINTOSH COUNTY)

In the fall of 1994, Don L. and Ray P., seeing the need for an AA meeting in northern McIntosh County, approached the McIntosh County Commissioner for permission to hold a weekly AA meeting at the Senior Citizen’s Center in Eulonia. Permission was granted and the necessary paperwork was submitted to Macon and to GSO, and the Eulonia Group became an “official” AA group.

On Tuesday, March 14, 1995, the first closed discussion meeting of the Eulonia Group was held at 8:00 pm at the Sr. Citizen’s Center. There were 4 persons present.

Bill Frazier, from Mechanicsville, NY, who spent the winter in the Golden Isles, adopted the Eulonia Group as his “Home group away from home”, and gave the group its first Big Book, inscribed with the date. Bill died on St. Simons Island in December, 2008. He would have been sober 49 years on March 16, 2009.

The Eulonia Group has never cancelled an 8 o’clock Tuesday night meeting– in spite of hurricanes, tornadoes, etc. At times we met in the kitchen because the Red Cross Blood Drive was using our main meeting room – but we never missed a meeting.

We have always contributed our fair share to the service structure of AA.

Each year in March, the group hosts an anniversary celebration. In 2009, there were nearly 100 people present for the celebration.

The group gradually grew from 4 original members to the present 18 members.

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In January, 2009, the group added a second weekly meeting on Thursdays. Due to declining attendance, this meeting was discontinued in 2012.

In April, 2012, the group added a women's meeting, which meets on Monday evenings at 6:30 pm at Morgan's Chapel Methodist Church at Shellman Bluff.

AA is alive and well in McIntosh County!

1997 – TWELVE AND TWELVE GROUP (ST. SIMONS)

The first meeting of the 12 and 12 was on January 12, 1997. There were six people in attendance: Jean G., Julie P., Sahn M., Dottie Lou W., Joanne W., and Jim W. The first four had met previously and expressed their hope that there could be a Step and Traditions meeting on St. Simons on Sunday evenings at 6:00. Their thoughts materialized with this first meeting at the Museum Building at Epworth-by-the-Sea. On May 4, 1997 the meeting moved to Lord of Life Lutheran Church on Frederica Road.

Jean G. chaired the first meeting and asked Julie P. to share her experience, strength, and hope on the First Step with the group. From that point on, each Sunday the chairperson asked someone to present their experience, strength and hope on a particular Step or Tradition for 10 to 15 minutes before opening it to group discussion. Those present agreed to work on a step the first 3 or 4 weeks of the month and to talk about the tradition corresponding to that month's number the last Sunday.

The second meeting was attended by 8 people; the following Sunday 12 recovering alcoholics shared their thoughts on that week's Step. As the weeks passed attendance increased steadily and fluctuated at that time between 6 and 17 with regular members being supplemented by visitors and newcomers. On September 2, 2001, the 12 and 12 Step and Tradition group moved to The Clubhouse on Demere Road, formerly the Boy Scout Building. It continues to offer Step and Tradition study for members who consider it their home group, newcomers, and visitors.

2001 – OUT TO LUNCH GROUP (ST. SIMONS)

In 2001, Bill D. got out of a treatment facility. At the time, all of the midday meetings were being held in Brunswick. Bill talked to Bill D. about starting a meeting on SSI. The SSI AA community had already begun having meetings in the

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Clubhouse, so the midday meeting was started with daily gatherings Mon-Sat from 11:30AM-12:30PM. There were 11 members at the first meeting.

Some of the initial Out to Lunch group members included Bill D, Edward J., Frank B. (The Chip-Monk), Gabby, Bob T. Bill L., David B., and Alvin. Later on, the group added members like Pat B., Shelia D., Adrienne P., Toinette, Jack, Marsha, and many others as regular contributors.

The midday meeting has a discussion tradition of going around the room and allowing every member the opportunity to share their feelings. It was felt this would help create an open atmosphere where all could feel comfortable sharing their concerns.

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday meetings are open discussion and take place in the Clubhouse large meeting room. Wednesday meetings are Big Book studies and take place in the back room of the Clubhouse to accommodate the Goodwill Group's main room meeting occurring simultaneously. Saturday meetings take place in the main meeting room and are step studies with readings from the 12 and 12 Book.

The midday meeting time has always been well suited for those that are new in sobriety or individuals visiting SSI. Also, Conway H's outpatient treatment program on SSI sent patients to the midday meeting as part of their recovery program.

2001 SUNDAY MORNING BREAKFAST SPEAKER (ST. SIMONS)

2001 – FIRST THINGS FIRST GROUP SSI (ST. SIMONS)

The founding members of the First Things First Group – SSI were Bob D., Bob T., and Alvin. Other original members were Gabby, David B., Patrick T and Tom K. The group meets at the Clubhouse at 7 am Monday through Friday.

2004 – 5 O'CLOCK LITERATURE HOUR (BRUNSWICK)

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This group was started by Robert H. and others who saw the need for a non-smoking early evening meeting in Brunswick. (The 5 O'clock Literature Hour group meets at 5:30)

2004 – LIFE AND BREATH GROUP (WAYNE COUNTY – JESUP)

In fall 2004 the idea to form a smoke-free AA group in Wayne County was revisited at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Jesup, Georgia. Ann and Mike D, Christine W, Betty B, Betty S, Elaine P, Judy W, Nancy L and Nancy O began attending meetings on Monday and Thursday evenings at 6:00 at the church at 745 South Palm Street. There they received generous support from the Reverend Chris Schuller and his wife Bettina, as well as the Wayne County Al-Anon Group, which holds meetings at St. Paul's on Monday and Thursday evenings at 7:00.

The Life & Breath Group decided on open meeting formats, in order to accommodate Al-Anon members and others interested in alcoholism, with book study every Thursday evening. It was suggested that, from time to time, closed meetings would be held for book study, group conscience, and business sessions.

Reverend Schuller allowed the group use of the fellowship hall with kitchen privileges. The men's Sunday School room also was allocated for use when regular church activities required use of the fellowship hall.

In winter 2005, Elaine P was elected as the group's first GSR, Betty S as first secretary-treasurer, and Mike D as Grapevine representative. Ann D previously had served as de facto secretary-treasurer in order to pay the \$25 monthly rent of the fellowship hall to St. Paul's and later became secretary-treasurer in 2008. In March 2005 Elaine P sent to the Georgia Assembly and the New York Office of AA the necessary membership forms that would make Life & Breath Group known as an AA group and to receive a group number. The group also approved payment of \$100 for its GSR's attendance each year at the Georgia AA Assembly in Macon.

In spring 2005 the group saw increased attendance, including newcomers, visitors and guests. The average meeting now hosts about eight persons. A telephone call list is updated and distributed regularly. The 2006 secretary-treasurer, Betty S, reported the opening of the group's checking account and a balance of \$80. That balance has grown to a prudent reserve, enabling the group to send a modest sum to GSO and GSSA each year.

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In fall 2008, the group held its 4th anniversary, attended by AA and guests from Districts 3 and 3A. About 25 persons attended, including AA families and Al-Anon.

Service work initiated by Ann D in 2006 saw the group sponsor AA meetings at the Jesup jail. Representing St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Bettina Schuller also attended.

Four years after the inception of the Life & Breath Group as a smoke-free meeting, other smoke-free meetings on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evening at 6:00 have been initiated at the Wayne County Group clubhouse on Pine Street in Jesup.

2007 – EARLY DOES IT GROUP (BRUNSWICK)

The Early Does It group originally met at 7:00 am at the Alco Service Club.

Slowly but steadily we kept coming back and hooked up with the wave to the First Presbyterian Church and started meeting there in June of 08.

We now meet at 7:30 am Monday thru Saturday

2007 – THE NEW GROUP (BRUNSWICK)

This group was formerly a Monday night meeting at the Alco Service Club, and in 2007 was formed into an official AA group.

2008 – UNION STREET GROUP (BRUNSWICK)

By December 2007 the Recovery Community in Brunswick's South End was growing by leaps and bounds, and the idea of finding a new meeting location kept coming up. We searched high and low in the downtown area as well as nearby neighborhoods.

Finally we settled on the idea of approaching the historic First Presbyterian Church on Union Street, where we knew other community groups were holding meetings on a regular basis. Palmer F. agreed to take the action and successfully negotiated a small conference room for our use twice a week, Monday & Thursday nights.

A flyer was circulated announcing the new meeting and location, and on the first Monday night in January, 2008, just before the 7pm meeting started, we were amazed to realize that we had already outgrown the space!

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We began meeting upstairs, dragging more and more little wooden chairs from youth classrooms down the hall to join our bigger and bigger meeting circle. The second week in January we handed out our first white chip at the Union Street Group.

AA members from St. Simons as well as Jekyll Island came out to support our meetings and helped spread the word about the new 7pm open meetings at Union Street. Within just a few weeks, we outgrew that room too.

In March we moved to a bigger room on the 2nd floor formerly used for storage, so once we had organized this new space for our meetings we could actually leave our chairs and literature in place. We were finally home!

The Monday & Thursday night meetings continued to grow throughout the Spring of 2008. We then heard that a morning and a lunchtime meeting were looking for a new home. Could we accommodate them too? The church "Fathers" were consulted and they agreed to let us rehab the roomy but neglected church basement to house our growing meeting schedule.

Being below sea level, 2 massive sump pumps had been installed in the basement closets to keep the room from flooding during heavy rains. But the pumps could not prevent mold and moisture damage to the painted brick walls or the painted concrete floor. The basement space was plenty big enough, but not yet hospitable! It would take a lot of work to make the room habitable.

Undaunted, painter Tony M. stepped up to the plate with a plan. He and his crew plus many group members spent a weekend scraping, priming and painting the walls. The transformation from dark blue peeling paint to fresh bright cream-colored walls was miraculous!

Meg made curtains and bought table cloths, the supply closet was set up, a Big Book & literature bookshelf organized, Steps & Traditions hung on the wall. The bulletin board, coffee pot table and framed AA slogans completed the necessities, and we were in business. Beginning in June 2008, we had established 3 meetings a day, 6 days a week!

A GSR and Treasurer were elected; we had a Group Number and were officially called The Union Street Group. In addition to the night meetings, we support a 7am meeting and a "Nooner" at 11:30am. All our meetings are open and non-smoking! Monday and Thursday are Discussion Meetings, Tuesday is the Women's Meeting,

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Wednesday is the Big Book Study, Friday is a Speaker Meeting, and Saturday is a "Young People's Meeting" (of course, everyone is welcome) which starts at 8pm so we don't have to choose between Bowling and AA!

We were amazed...in just 6 months a new hub of recovery in Brunswick's South End Historic District was thriving far beyond what any human powers could have achieved.

As January 2009 rolled around with Union Street Group's 1 Year Anniversary, we all celebrated as a 1 year chip was picked up by that newcomer who had held onto the group's first white chip since January 2008, and the circle was complete.

2008 – NUTS FOR LUNCH GROUP (BRUNSWICK)

The Nuts for Lunch Group was in the works since January, 2008. It started out as a bunch of drunks that met daily at 11:30 at the Alco Service Club. We told the Service Club we wanted to form a group, but to no avail. The Alco Board said "If it is not broke don't fix it".

Being so early in sobriety we did not know what to do. A few meetings were held to look for a solution. We looked to the old timers for guidance. We were instructed to look for a place in the downtown area - you know public buildings, empty office space and such. At this point we were "out to get" the Service Club (hey we were a bunch of alkeys not getting what we wanted).

It was suggested we talk to the Union Street people about using space with them. We talked to the First Presbyterian Church and they said we could use the basement and meet when we wanted!!

That was June of 08 and we have been growing ever since.

2008 – SOUL PURPOSE GROUP (BRUNSWICK)

The Soul Purpose Group is a Big Book Study group that meets at 6:00 pm on Wednesdays at the Alco Service Club.

2008 WOMEN'S SATURDAY 11TH STEP MEDITATION (ST. SIMONS)

For many years, Marilou and Pat M. had attended the "Eleventh Step" meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous at 7 pm on Tuesdays in Alexandria, VA. It was a

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candlelight, meditation discussion meeting. After a hectic day (or week) it was such a relief to enter that quiet, darkened room, spend some time in guided meditation, hear one of our members share their experience in implementing the 11th Step in their daily life and have the group engage in further discussion on the 11th step.

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Marilou was determined to share that incredible experience with her friends in recovery here as soon as she was able to be here for a stretch long enough to get it going. With a firm commitment of support from half a dozen women (her sponsor, Fran D., and sponsee, Cheryl S. being among them), they held their first meeting on May 17, 2008, at 11:30 am in the Parish Hall of St. William Catholic Church on St. Simons Island, GA. They maintain essentially the same format and are unanimous in their appreciation of the powerful experience derived from a group of women seeking guidance and discernment from their Higher Power. While still a relatively small meeting, they generally have half a dozen to a dozen or so, including an occasional island visitor.

?? – HEAR AND NOW GROUP (ST. SIMONS)

?? STEP BY STEP GROUP (ST. SIMONS)

The Step by Step Group meets at Holy Nativity Church on St. Simons.

?? – FIRST THINGS FIRST (BRUNSWICK)