Intergroup 17, Inc.
Ocala-Marion County, Florida

The Voice

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In this issue

One Member's Voice.....1
Tradition 12 by Bill W.....1
December Birthdays.....2
December by the Books.....2
Service Opportunities.....3
District 17 Corner.....3
Group Contributions.....5
Spiritual Experiences.....6
Meetings/Announcements.....8
Contact Intergroup.....10

Be Happy, Joyous, and Free this Holiday Season

Intergroup 17

A quote for December

Today is a gift. That's why they call it the present.

One member's voice

The spiritual awakening never ends

A story of experience, strength, and hope

"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

Awakening again from yet another drunk, I had finally reached that point of complete demoralization. I cried out for help from whatever source there was in the universe. For sure, I had no idea what that source was, and that wasn't important. It was only important that I knew it wasn't me.

That source carried me to the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. Totally broken, and therefore ready (some might call it in a state of grace), I began the work required for me to have a spiritual awakening—AA's Twelve Steps.

As with most good alcoholics, I would often retreat into my ego and say, at least to myself if not out loud, "No, I can't do that," or "That can't help." Then I'd give up and listen to reason, and I'd respect the program and my sponsor, both of which were giving me the good orderly direction I needed so badly. With each step I took, my life improved.

At first, I had to remove the word God from my newly sprouting spirituality. That word carried too much baggage, too many old concepts. I needed a fresh start. I knew that I believed in a power greater than myself. I also believed that if I could just keep my ego and myself out of the way, I might have a shot at this spiritual journey I kept reading about. So instead of God, I just used a word that felt good to me, and that was Source.

While I was working the Steps, I was reading other literature, praying, meditating, and discovering what my Source was. As I progressed through the Steps, I could feel the change starting in me. The fear and self-loathing were lessening. The grief was not as overwhelming, and I began to trust my own judgment.

Continued page 4

Tradition Twelve by Bill W

"Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities."

The spiritual substance of anonymity is sacrifice. Because AA's Twelve Traditions repeatedly ask us to give up personal desires for the common good, we realize that the sacrificial spirit--well symbolized by anonymity--is the foundation of them all. It is AA's proved willingness to make these sacrifices that gives people their high confidence in our future.

But in the beginning, anonymity was not born of confidence; it was the child of our early fears. Our first nameless groups of alcoholics were secret societies. New prospects could find us only through a few trusted friends. The bare hint of publicity, even for our work, shocked us. Though ex-drinkers, we still thought we had to hide from public distrust and contempt.

When the big book appeared in 1939, we called it "Alcoholics Anonymous." Its foreword made this revealing statement: "It is important that we remain anonymous because we are too few, at present, to handle the overwhelming number of personal appeals which may result from this publication. Being mostly business or professional folk, we could not well carry on our occupations in such an event." Between these lines it is easy to read our fear that large

Continued page 7

Congratulations December Birthdays!

This issue we celebrate anniversaries of our local AA family members that add up to a collective 536 years. That's more than 195,640 days of sobriety. One day at a time!

Don C	44 years
Rafael Q	31 years
Dawn C	26 years
Lorne S	26 years
Marianne M	26 years
Joe S	24 years
Dennis O	23 years
Bill W	22 years
Roger D	22 years
Jim C	21 years
Eddie R	12 years
Pete H	11 years
Al C	10 years
Rose R	10 years
Lisa S	9 years
Beth S	6 years
Billy S	5 years
Stephanie	5 years
Bob H	4 years
Mark	4 years
Troy H	4 years
Barbara K	3 years
Kelli	3 years
Max R	3 years
Mike B	3 years
Ron F	3 years
Ron R	3 years
Chris M	2 years
Bob R	2 years
Mitch D	2 years
Pamela S	2 years
Robert D	2 years
Wayne M	2 years
BJ	1 year
Gary B	1 year
James W	1 year
Kema W	1 year
Robert D	1 year
Ron W	1 year
Bill K	28 years
Mary-Ann	12 years
David O	5 years
Ann R	2 years
Dennis W	2 years
Haley	2 years
Philip S	2 years
Billy C	1 year
Bobby J	1 year
Brendan	1 year
Ken W	1 year
Max	1 year
Ricky B	1 year
Rose	1 year
Tara	1 year
Tina S	1 year

More November Birthdays

Charlie	37 years
Monroe C	31 years
Wayne C	30 years

Please share your AA birthday with all. Deadline for January birthdays is December 20.
E-mail to: thevoice@aaocalamarion.org
Telephone: 352 867-0660.

December by the Books

STEP TWELVE

"Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

"No satisfaction has been deeper and no joy greater than in a Twelfth Step job well done. To see the eyes of men and women open with wonder as they move from darkness into light, to see their lives quickly fill with new purpose and meaning, and above all to watch them awaken to the presence of a loving God in their lives---these things are the substance of what we receive as we carry A.A.'s message."

Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions, page 110

TRADITION TWELVE

"*Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."*

"Nothing matter more to A.A.'s future welfare than the manner in which we use the colossus of modern communications. Used unselfishly and well, it can produce results surpassing our present imagination.
Should we handle this great instrument badly, we will be shattered by ego manifestations of our own people.
Against this peril, A.A. members' anonymity before the general public is our shield and our buckler."

Grapevine, November 1960

CONCEPT TWELVE

General Warranties of the Conference: in all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference Members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of th others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcohol Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

The A.A. Service Manual page 62

Recovery. Unity. Service.

These are the Three Legacies given to the whole membership of AA by its founders and their fellow old-timers. Here's your chance to complete the triangle. Service opportunities abound with Intergroup 17 and District 17. If nothing here appeals to your sense of service, just call Intergroup at 352 867-0660. There's plenty more to do!

Put yourself out front! As an Intergroup 17 Office Volunteer

Get some more life into your life. Volunteer to staff the Intergroup office. Help needed especially on Saturdays 10 am to 2 pm, but other times are available. Two years of sobriety required. To learn more, call 352 867-0660.

Hotline and 12th Step calls.

Intergroup has a critical need for volunteers to answer our 24-Hour Hotline "after business hours" from their own home or cell phones. Others needed to help respond to 12th Step calls. One year of sobriety required. Call Intergroup 17 to volunteer: 352-867-0660.

District 17 . Committee chairs and other service positions. Volunteers needed.

We need several volunteers to serve in Committee Chair and other service positions. See below for more.

Take the message to local correctional institutions.

Women's Meetings

There is a critical need to carry the message to women in prison (women only). To learn more, call 352 867-0660.

Through *The Grapevine*!

Many of our brothers and sisters in area corrections facilities enjoy reading *The AA Grapevine*. Drop off your old copies at the Intergroup Office, or coordinate a group effort through your GSR.

Also see page 9 for a special way to talk our "meeting in print" to corrections institutions and treatment centers.

Publicize your group's service opportunities in The Voice. Call 352 867-0660 or email to thevoice@aaocalamarion.org

District 17 Corner

October Meeting Summary

- Meeting was held on October 29 at St. Mark's UMC. 23 officers, committee chairs, and GSRs in attendance.
- DCM B, Nancy D reported on group visits, provided highlights of the Area Assembly, and noted an overall decline in financial contributions throughout the US.
- Treasurer's report accepted; 2010 budgets will be discussed at the November meeting.
- Archives chair Kathy P asked GSRs to canvass groups about paying for archival storage space at Intergroup. Oral history project of local AA groups and community continuing.
- Corrections chair John J tendered his resignation. New committee chair person will be sought.
- Gratitude Dinner chair Francine H reported on ticket sales and selection of guest speaker for the event.
- Intergroup chair Hank N reported on the need for volunteers to work the Intergroup office desk and for 12th Step calls.
- CPC/PI Committee chair Michelle Y reported on a new poster to be placed in schools and flyers to be posted as appropriate with Intergroup phone number.

Please note that District 17 will not meet during December.

Next meeting. All invited. Get involved.

Thursday, January 28, 6 pm

St. Mark's United Methodist
1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

First Contact

"Is this AA? Well, um . . .
I might have a drinking problem . . .
Can you help me?"

Can YOU?
Yes YOU can!
Will YOU?

Just say "Yes" to
answering 12th Step calls,
We'll show you the rest.
Call Intergroup to learn more.
352 867-0660

North Florida Area Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous Area Assembly

January 15-17, 2010.

Paramount Resort & Conference Center
2900 SW 13th Street, Gainesville, FL

Friday, January 15
Registration
Discussion meeting

Saturday, January 16
New GSR and DCM orientations
Workshops
Officer meetings
Dinner meeting, and much more.

Sunday, January 17
Business meeting

Please note:

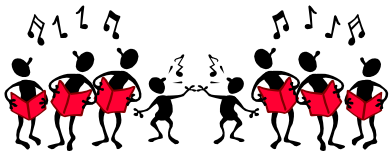
- All members of AA are invited to attend all functions.
- Only voting DCMs & GSRs or their alternates in their absence may vote at the business meeting on Sunday. Participants must be seated by 9:00am Sunday in order to vote.

Find complete meeting information and full agenda at www.aanorthflorida.org

To make hotel reservations at the assembly's group rate call: 877-992-9229 or download a reservation card at www.aanorthflorida.org

A few holiday songs

for the alcoholic who's been there and heard them all.



From The Grapevine, December 2007. Reprinted

Delirium tremens
Do I Hear What I Hear?

Blackout
I Don't Know If I'll Be Home for Christmas

Self-centeredness
Hark the Herald Angels Sing About Me

Another blackout
Walking in a Winter Wonderland Miles from My Home in My Slippers and Robe

Newcomers' lament
Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas While I Sit Here and Hyperventilate.

The Spiritual Awakening . . .

Continued from page 1

The relief this brought made me anxious to share what I had found with others. My sponsor pointed out that at first I needed to give back by doing the work I was capable of doing at that time. That meant work like sharing in meetings, giving rides to meetings, reaching out to make the newcomer feel welcome, attending the monthly group conscience meetings, and chairing meetings when asked.

So I did what I could, and remarkably, that too made me feel stronger, less afraid, and more comfortable in my own skin. It was amazing! To me it seemed to be the best medicine I had ever taken.

The more I thought about others and the program, the less I thought about me and my problems. I was giving without expectation of reward, I had never done that. Up to that point my giving was all about me. This new way of giving was true love, and it was freeing to my spirit.

When I had completed the Twelve Steps myself, it was time to help other women to do the same. How did I know when it became that time? Well, I knew it was time when other women asked me to sponsor them. I confirmed with my sponsor, and it happened.

Now the Source was truly in charge, not me. For the first time in my life I was able to hear and feel the direction of the Source, and it was clearest when it came to helping others. My Source had been there all along, but I was so self-absorbed that I had blocked it.

My ego, of course, still gets in the way from time to time. I have tried to rescue rather than help, or to give advice rather than to listen. When I do such things, the results teach me how to act and react better in the future.

When I sponsor someone, I am still the same fallible human being I've always been. I don't put on a "Super Sponsor Suit" and step out to defeat all injustice and wrongs in the world. My sponsorship is simply me being me, and doing the best I can to help another individual find herself through the Twelve Steps of AA. More often than not, I learn much more than I teach.

Here's the interesting thing about how this program works. Once I had worked these Twelve Steps, it was just as natural as a baby suckling at her mother's breast for me to carry these principles into all of my affairs. In fact, it would feel unnatural for me to do otherwise. Yes, from time to time I do mess up, and I do feel uncomfortable, but the program has an answer for that too. It's the process of making amends.

This program is similar to physical exercise to me. As long as I exercise my body, it will stay strong. As long as I continue to work the Twelve Steps, my spiritual condition will stay strong.

Now I can say that through these Steps, all of them, one through twelve, I am having a spiritual awakening. The awakening will never be over for me, and I am so very glad. It would be awful to think that I would wake in the morning and not learn something new about my Source and myself.

Mary F T
Ocala, Florida
December 2009

The thoughts, expressions, and opinions expressed on these pages are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Alcoholics Anonymous or Intergroup 17, Ocala-Marion County, Florida.

We cannot skimp . .

Our spiritual way of life is safe for future generations if, as a society, we resist the temptation to receive money from the outside world.

But this leaves us with a responsibility--one that every member ought to understand. We cannot skimp when the treasurer of our group passes the hat.

Our groups, our areas, and AA as a whole, will not function unless our services are sufficient and their bills are paid.

When we meet and defeat the temptation to take large gifts, we are only being prudent.

But when we are generous with the hat we give a token that we are grateful for our blessings and evidence that we are eager to share what we have found with all those who suffer.

Bill W, The Grapevine, November, 1957
Reprinted by permission AA Grapevine.

Join the Birthday Club

Celebrate an AA anniversary—yours or another member's—with a contribution to help Intergroup 17 carry the message to other alcoholics in Ocala and Marion County. To join, send name, sobriety date, years of sobriety, and a donation—suggested is $1, $5, or $10 for each year of sobriety.

Make checks payable to and send with celebrant's information to:
Intergroup 17
3666-A N.E. 25th Street
Ocala, Florida 34470

How Groups and Individuals Support the Work of AA

Group contributions are the major funding source for the work of Intergroup 17 and other areas of AA. Many groups follow the 50-30-10-10 plan of support after they meet their own financial needs:

- 50 percent to Intergroup 17
- 30 percent to AA Worldwide General Services Office
- 10 percent to North Florida Area Assembly
- 10 percent to District 17

Group contributions

Intergroup 17
P.O. Box 1192
Ocala, FL 34478

The General Service Office
P.O. Box 459
6035 E. Tudor St.
New York, NY 10164

NFACAA
P.O. Box 567
Melbourne, FL 32902

District 17
P.O. Box 3081
Ocala, FL 34478

Member contributions

Individual members can provide financial support to Intergroup 17 in various ways.

- *Faithful Fivers*: $5 each month
- *Double Nickel*: $10 each month
- *Birthday Club Members*: $1 or more per year of sobriety, on their AA "birthday"

All contributions count

In the spirit of participation, no contribution toward carrying the message can be too small. Bill W spoke of our "collective obligation" to support AA services. If everyone waited until they had a "sizeable' amount, it's more than likely that AA's bills would go unpaid.

Please contribute what you can when you can. Thanks.

Group Contributions to Intergroup 17. Fiscal Year June 2009-May 2010.

Figures below reflect total contributions for FY2009-10. June 1 through October 31. 2009 only.

11th Step Group	
17th Street Group	
164 Pages Group	$ 68.00
ACOA	
ALANON	
Acceptance	100.00
Alive and Well	50.00
All You Need	
Anonymity Group	
As Bill Sees It, The Villages	137.25
Belleview Eye Opener	
Belleview Group	100.14
Belleview God's Way	3.00
Bonfire Group, The Refuge	
Breakfast Club	775.79
Came To Believe	
Citra Group	
Come As You Are	
Conscious Contact	37.98
Day by Day	
Dunellon Group	
Dunellon Rainbow Group	
Experience, Strength & Hope	
First Impressions Group	
Forest Group	80.00
Ft. McCoy Group	
Fountain of Gratitude	77.00
Free To Be	20.00
God's Way Group	15.77
Grace Group	
Grateful Gals	
Happy Highlanders	
Happy Hour Group	50.00
Happy, Joyous & Free	631.05
Headstart Group	203.76
It's In The Book	
Keep It Simple	308.00
Last Call Group	50.00
Last House On The Block	
Life Is Good Sober	
Lifesaver Group	100.00
Living Sober	275.35
Lunch Bunch	149.11
Mano Abierta	25.00
Marion Oaks Group	
McIntosh Group	
New Attitudes	
New Beginnings, Dunellon	
No Name Group	45.00
Nueva Vida	
Ocala AM Men's Group	302.00
Ocala Group	1149.12
Ocklawaha AM Group	
One Page At A Time	
Primary Purpose	27.00
Resentment Too Group	
Shores of Sobriety	60.00
Sisters of Serenity	
Start A New Life	50.00
Steps and Promises	
Stop Whining and Sober Up	
Strength In Numbers	00.70
Summerfield Group	32.00
Sundae Social Group	
TLC Group - the Centers	
We Give Thanks	
We Give Up	42.50
Weir Crazy, Summerfield	340.00
Williston Winners	
Won Rebos Group	
Young People's Group (YPG)	81.98
Birthday Club	
Double Nickels	10.00
Faithful Fivers	
Individuals	50.50
Total	**$5393.57**

I am responsible.
Whenever anyone
anywhere
reaches out for help,
I want the hand of
AA to be there.
For that I am responsible.

Intergroup 17 Call Center Report October 2009

Meeting info requests	77
Twelfth Step Calls	2
Office transactions	28
Visitors	36
Al-Anon*	8
Miscellaneous	24

Does not include all after hours hot-line calls.
*Calls requesting information on or needing assistance from Al-Anon are respectfully referred to the appropriate local resources.

This is it!
My personal spiritual experience.

My name is Rich, and I'm an alcoholic. I was born in Newark, New Jersey in 1944 to an Irish Catholic family. Every one of them was a drinker. After I found alcohol for myself at around age 14, my acting-out got me into a lot of trouble—all alcohol related— at my prep school and with the police.

Somehow, I graduated high school and went on to a small Catholic men's college in Vermont. There my drinking really took off.

Nonetheless, I got my degree and shortly thereafter married my college sweetheart, who was also my drinking buddy. Despite my continued drinking, we were quite successful in our own business. As time went on, however, the drinking got much worse and eventually became a very serious threat to my business, my marriage, and most of my other relationships.

In November of 1982, one of my business partners announced that unless I did something about my drinking he no longer wanted to be my partner or friend. He said that I turned into a Dr. Jeckyll/Mr. Hyde personality. His words scared the hell out of me. I became terrified.

After that encounter, I drove back to my office in a neighboring town, where I was to meet a fellow who wanted to see a small office building that I had listed for sale. I was a commercial real estate broker at the time. All during that drive I kept muttering to myself, "I have to stop drinking. I have to stop drinking." And I kept asking, "How do I do it? How do I do it?"

I met up with my prospect, and as we were driving to the site, I asked him what use he had in mind for the property. He said, "I'm the executive director of a local drug and alcohol service agency. We help folks with drug and alcohol problems."

I nearly fainted. It seemed like the inside of my car suddenly lit up, and I heard three words clearly in my head: "THIS IS IT." Without a doubt in my mind, I knew that those words had come from God. This was it, my last shot at sobriety, and I took it.

The drug and alcohol agency bought the building, and I became their first client in the new space. I never drank again. I joined AA back in 1983—my sobriety date is May 15—and for the first time in my life I actually did what I was told to do by my sponsor and by the "old timers" I hung around with. I very quickly got into and completed the Twelve Steps, sponsored folks, went to a lot of meetings, and still go regularly. Now I'm an old timer.

My wife of 42 years and I are now semi-retired and have a great life. She is a gem and has over 20 years sober herself. We have two great sons and two beautiful granddaughters. We are blessed.

Still, I will never forget that day in 1982 when, after many years of trying to stop drinking on my own, God decided to take a seat in the back of my car and whisper in my ear "THIS IS IT." He took time out of his busy day to help me, and I am forever grateful to Him, my sponsors, and all of the AA's for helping me stay sober for 26 years, "one day at a time."

Rich F.
Ocala Florida and Colchester, Vermont

I knew I had a spiritual experience when . ..

Responses from local members to our request to complete the phrase: I knew I had a spiritual experience when . . .

" . . . upon awakening one morning, I knew exactly where my car was."
Will E

" . . . all the promises came true. This year has been rough for me and others, yet thru it all I stayed sober. My health brought me near death, yet my higher power kept me alive. I have seen that no matter what, God is in control. I am amazed each day how he carries me thru. 'Letting go and letting God' frees me of self centeredness. What I give in service to AA, and I get back tenfold."
Arlene H

Some thoughts on Twelfth Step work. And a call to action.

Integroup17 has a pressing need for volunteers to help with 12th Step calls. If you want to contribute in this way, an application accompanies this issue of The Voice. If the application is missing, please call 352 867-0660 for complete information today.

12th Step work is both inspirational and practical, often the spark that rekindles the fires of shining hope, and at the same time a completely realistic approach to a very tough problem. Few situations arise anywhere that offer a greater challenge to one's ingenuity, resourcefulness, perseverance and the best of his brains than those which arise commonly in 12th Step work. Nor, it should be added, are there many things which man does that require more hard work than is so often needed in the completion of a 12th Step task.

In 12th Step work, one is dealing with the most exasperating, stubborn, conniving, prevaricating, baffling, unpredictable, twisted and messed-up human being at large—the drunk. Successful 12th Step work calls for practically all of the virtues and talents given man, and often, even if any A.A. had all of the virtues and all of the talents, they would not be enough.

Yet, 12th Step work also offers more drama, more comedy, suspense, thrills and excitement than one will ever find on any movie screen. And it is real. It is life in the raw. It takes care of any idle time that may have been dragging heavily. And it has given to many an A.A. experiences that yield the greatest happiness of a lifetime.

Finally, of course, 12th Step work is certainly one of the surest, if not the surest, way of keeping sober. The reason it is so effective is that it almost compels one engaging in it to keep thinking in the direction that preserves sobriety. It is, at the same time, a reminder of what has been and a warning of what could be again.

Excerpted from *The AA Grapevine*, October, 1946
Reprinted by permission,

Tradition Twelve by Bill W

Continued from page 1

numbers of incoming people might break our anonymity wide open.

As the AA groups multiplied, so did anonymity problems. Enthused over the spectacular recovery of a brother alcoholic, we'd sometimes discuss those intimate and harrowing aspects of his case meant for his sponsor's ear alone. The aggrieved victim would then rightly declare that his trust had been broken. When such stories got into circulation outside of AA, the loss of confidence in our anonymity promise was severe. It frequently turned people from us. Clearly, every AA member's name--and story, too--had to be confidential, if he wished. This was our first lesson in the practical application of anonymity.

With characteristic intemperance, however, some of our newcomers cared not at all for secrecy. They wanted to shout AA from the housetops, and did. Alcoholics barely dry rushed about bright-eyed, button-holing anyone who would listen to their stories. Others hurried to place themselves before microphones and cameras. Sometimes they got distressingly drunk and let their groups down with a bang. They had changed from AA members into AA show-offs.

This phenomenon of contrast really set us thinking. Squarely before us was the question, "How anonymous should an AA member be?" Our growth made it plain that we couldn't be a secret society, but it was equally plain that we couldn't be a vaudeville circuit either. The charting of a safe path between these extremes took a long time.

As a rule, the average newcomer wanted his family to know immediately what he was trying to do. He also wanted to tell others who had tried to help him--his doctor, his minister, and close friends. As he gained confidence, he felt it right to explain his new way of life to his employer and business associates. When opportunities to be helpful came along, he found he could talk easily about AA to almost: anyone. These quiet disclosures helped him to lose his fear of the alcoholic stigma, and spread the news of AA's existence in his community. Many a new man and woman came to AA because of such conversations. Though not in the strict letter of anonymity, such communications were well within its spirit.

But it became apparent that the word-of-mouth method was too limited. Our work, as such, needed to be publicized. The AA groups would have to reach quickly as many despairing alcoholics as they could. Consequently many groups began to hold meetings which were open to interested friends and the public, so that the average citizen could see for himself just what AA was all about. The response to these meetings was warmly sympathetic. Soon groups began to receive requests for AA speakers to appear before civic organizations, church groups, and medical societies. Provided anonymity was maintained on these platforms, and reporters present were cautioned against the use of names or pictures, the result was fine.

Then came our first few excursions into major publicity, which were breath-taking. Cleveland's Plain Dealer articles about us ran that town's membership from a few into hundreds overnight. The news stories of Mr. Rockefeller's dinner for Alcoholics Anonymous helped double our total membership in a year's time. Jack Alexander's famous Saturday Evening Post piece made AA a national institution. Such tributes as these brought opportunities for still more recognition. Other newspapers and magazines wanted AA stories. Film companies wanted to photograph us. Radio, and finally television, besieged us with requests for appearances. What should we do?

As this tide offering top public approval swept in, we realized that it could do us incalculable good or great harm. Everything would depend upon how it was channeled. We simply couldn't afford to take the chance of letting self-appointed members present themselves as messiahs representing AA before the whole public. The promoter instinct in us might be our undoing. If even one publicly got drunk, or was lured into using AA's name for his own purposes, the damage might be irreparable. At this altitude (press, radio, films, and television), anonymity--one hundred-percent anonymity--was the only possible answer. Here principles would have to come before personalities, without exception.

These experiences taught us that anonymity is real humility at work. It is an all-pervading spiritual quality which today keynotes AA life everywhere. Moved by the spirit of anonymity, we try to give up our natural desires for personal distinction as AA members both among fellow alcoholics and before the general public. As we lay aside these very human aspirations, we believe that each of us takes part in the weaving of a protective mantle which covers our whole society and under which we may grow and work in unity.

We are sure that humility, expressed by anonymity, is the greatest safeguard that AA can ever have.

Reprinted by permission of AA Grapevine.

Thank You District 17

And especially to all those who helped in so many ways, great and small, to make the Gratitude Dinner a truly enriching experience.

Food, fun, and fellowship at its finest. And all planned, created, and executed by AA volunteers with the dedicated leadership of Gratitude Dinner chair Francine H.

Thank you all for your service. Congratulations on a job well done.

Upcoming Events and Meetings of Interest

Ocala/Marion County

There are more than 140 AA meetings per week in Ocala/ Marion county visit. Check out the Where & When online: www.aaocalamarion.org

Monday

Beginners Meeting
17th Street Group
6:00pm every Monday
Church of Christ
2730 SE Maricamp Rd., Ocala

Wednesday

Meditation
Conscious Contact
7:00pm every Wednesday
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church
3452 NE Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala

Spanish Speaking
Grupo Nueva Vida
7:00pm every Wednesday
150-A SW 23rd Ave. (1/2 block South of Ft. King), Ocala

Thursday

Eat 'n Speak
Keep It Simple Group
Last Thursday of the month
Eat: 7:00pm Speaker: 8:00pm
Small fee for meal
ALL INVITED!
Ascension Lutheran Church
5730 SE 28th Street, Ocala

District 17 Monthly Meeting
6:00 pm last Thursday of the month
All GSRs. Everyone welcome.
St. Mark's United Methodist
1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala
No meeting in December

Friday

Speaker Meeting
Experience, Strength and Hope
8:00pm every Friday
Druid Hills Methodist Church
1712 SE Lake Weir Blvd., Ocala

Spanish Speaking
Grupo Mano Abierta
7:00pm every Friday
2082 Walnut Street, Dunnellon

Saturday

Eat 'n Speak
Ocala Group
Last Saturday of the month
Eat: 7:00pm Speaker: 8:00pm
Small fee for meal All welcome.
St. Mark's United Methodist
1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

Spanish Speaking
Grupo Mano Abierta
7:00pm every Saturday
2082 Walnut Street, Dunnellon

Sunday

Intergroup 17 Monthly
5:15 pm second Sunday of month
Intergroup Reps. All welcome.
St. Mark's United Methodist
1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

Newer Meetings

Acceptance Group
Thursdays, 5:30 pm, 50/50 Raffle
Saturdays, 5:30 pm, Grapevine mtg.
Lost & Found club
339 NE Sanchez Avenue, Ocala

The Come As You Are Women's Group
Big Book, first Tuesday of month
Speaker, last Tuesday of month
1138 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

Thursday Night Step Group
Closed Step Meeting
Thursdays, 8 pm
South Ocala Baptist Church
2907 SE 52nd St, Ocala, FL

Carry the Message
Open Discussion, 7 pm
Monday and Friday
Zion United Methodist Church
1605 Blichton Road
(Corner ML King Blvd & Blichton, north of the railroad crossing)

Added New Meeting

164 Pages Group
12&12 and Big Book Format

Wednesdays 6 pm.
Ocklawaha Methodist Church
13333 East Highway 25
Ocklawaha

No meeting December 25 Experience Strength & Hope

The regular 8 pm speaker meeting of the Experience, Strength & Hope group will not be held on Christmas Day, December 25.

December at the Lost and Found Club

339 NE Sanchez Avenue
(NE 4th St. & Tuscawilla Park)
352-351-4688

Saturday, 12/5: Dance, 9 pm
Friday, 12/11: Game Night, free
Saturday, 12/12: Bingo, 9 pm
Friday, 12/18: Movie Night,, free, 9 pm
Saturday, 12/19: Bingo, 9 pm

Christmas Eve Dinner
Thursday, December 24

Some meeting times are now available for local AA groups. Inquire at the club.

The Lost and Found Club is not affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous World Services or Intergroup 17. Local AA groups and others rent space from the club for meetings and events.

Central Florida Men's Retreat December 4-6, 2009

Fun. Fellowship. Spirituality. Recovery.

For more information, contact Inter-group 17 at 352 867-0660.

Special Events, Celebrations, Notices

Mark Your Calendar

See details elsewhere in this issue or link to more information.

12/4-6, 2009 Central Florida Men's Retreat, see info page 8.

1/15-17, 2010 North Florida Area Assembly, Gainesville. www.aanorthflorida.org

2/11-14, 2010 46th International Women's conference, Orlando. www.internationalwomensconference.org

7/1-4, 2010 International Convention, A Vision for You. San Antonio, TX. Register now. www.aa.org

8/11-15, 2010 54th Florida State Convention, Miami. http://54.flstateconvention.com

Corrections Workshop December 12, Jacksonville

Learn how AA members and groups take meetings to fellow alcoholics in correctional institutions. This Area 14 workshop will address:.

- State Application
- State Prisons
- Pre Release / Bridging the Gap
- County Jails
- Speakers
- Sign Up Sheets

December 12, 2009
2:30 to 5:00 pm
JABA Club in Jacksonville
3645 Spring Park Rd, Jacksonville, Florida

To learn more, call 352 867-0660.

Intergroup 17 needs you.

Put yourself on the front line of service work.

Intergroup 17 needs folks who would like to work the front desk.

Duties include:

- Sale of literature and other merchandise
- Writing sales tickets and collecting sales money.
- Answering the phone
- Providing meeting information or other assistance

The Greatest Rewards

You may be asked all kinds of questions regarding AA and related issues. Some calls will just need a listening ear and a caring heart. Some calls could be similar to a 12-Step call. This part of the job is most rewarding.

Training provided. Two years of sobriety needed.

Hours/Shifts

Monday thru Friday 10-2, or 2-5
Saturday 10-2.

Volunteer today!

For more information, contact Intergroup 17 office. 352 867-0660.

Save 30 to 45%!

Recovery related literature. Great holiday gift ideas.

Intergroup 17 is clearing the shelves of titles we will no longer carry for sale.

We're selling them at cost—usually a 30 to 45% savings—so take a look at the list below, If you see something you want, get it today.

Supply limited to current stock. Purchase at Intergroup office. Call for more information 352-867-0660. All AA literature at regular prices.

Share twice the message at half the price.

Send *The Grapevine* to corrections institutions and treatment centers.

Subscribe to the AA Grapevine—our meeting in print—this month and you can give a second gift subscription at half the price.

Here's a great idea. Send the second gift subscription to an area corrections institution or treatment center. Your gift will help carry the message to many who want it.

To take advantage of the special Gift Subscription offer visit www.aagrapevine.org
See local listings or call Intergroup for information on local facilities.

DISCLAIMER. The Voice newsletter is published by Intergroup 17 Ocala-Marion County, Florida, and is created by alcoholics for alcoholics. Articles in the newsletter written by individual members of Alcoholics Anonymous are expressions of their own experiences and opinions and not necessarily those of Intergroup 17 or AA as a whole. The Voice editorial committee reserves the right to edit anything submitted prior to its publication.

Intergroup 17 Meetings
Everyone invited!

Open to all. Learn more about AA, Intergroup, and the great opportunities for service work .

Sunday, December 13, 5:15 pm
St Mark's United Methodist
1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

Free Subscription. The Voice by e-mail.

For your free monthly subscription, send an e-mail with "Free Voice" in the subject line to:
thevoice@aaocalamarion.org

The Voice by e-mail is in PDF format. Requires Adobe Reader software. Free download available at www.adobe.com. Printed copies available at Intergroup office.

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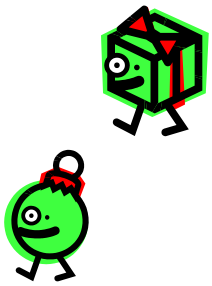
Website: aaocalamarion.org

Hours of operation

Monday-Friday 10 am to 5 pm
Saturday 10 am to 2 pm
Closed Christmas & New Year's Day

365 days a year
24-hour Hotline
352-867-0660

Twelve Tips for Keeping Your Holiday Season Sober and Joyous



Holiday parties without liquid spirits may still seem a dreary prospect to new AAs. But many of us have enjoyed the happiest holidays of our lives sober—an idea we would never have dreamed of, wanted, or believed possible when drinking.

Here are some reliable tips—reprinted by request—for having an all-round ball without a drop of alcohol.

Tip #1
Line up extra AA activities for the holiday season. Arrange to take newcomers to meetings, answer the phones at Intergroup, speak, help with dishes, or visit alcoholics in the hospital.

Tip #2
Be host to AA friends especially newcomers. If you don't have a place where you can throw a formal party, take one person to a dinner and spring for the coffee.

Tip #3
Keep you AA telephone list with you all the time. If a drinking urge or a panic occurs postpone everything else until you've called an AA.

Tip #4
Find out about the special holiday parties, meetings, or other celebrations given by groups in your area and go. If you are timid, take someone newer than you are.

Tip #5
Skip any drinking occasion you are nervous about. Remember how clever you were at excuses when drinking? Now put the talent to good use. No office party is as important as saving your life.

Tip #6
If you have to go to a drinking party and can't take an AA with you, keep some candy handy.

Tip #7
Don't think you have to stay late. Plan in advance an "important date" you have to keep.

Tip #8
Go to church—any church

Tip #9
Don't sit around brooding. Catch up on those books, movies, walks, and letters.

Tip #10
Don't start now getting worked up about all those holiday temptations. Remember: one day at a time.

Tip #11
Enjoy the true beauty of holiday love and joy. Maybe you can't give material gifts, but this year, you can give love.

Tip #12
Having had a . . . No need to spell out the Twelfth Step here, since you already know it.

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