Intergroup District 17
Marion County, Florida

The Voice

Volume 29, Number 1 January 2012

Intergroup District 17
3666A NE 25th Street
Ocala, FL 34470
In the N.E. 36th Ave
Industrial Park.
Phone: 352-867-0660

Office Hours
Monday-Friday 10 am to 5 pm
Saturday 10 am to 2 pm

Website: www.aaocalamarion.org
Email: aaocalaintegroup@gmail.com

Get Involved. Next Meeting.
Sunday, January 8, 2012
Intergroup Steering Committee
4:30pm, Intergroup Reps 5:15 pm
St. Mark's United Methodist Church
1839 NE 8th Ave, Ocala

Have a Happy and Sober New Year
Intergroup 17

A quote for January

"AA is no success story in the ordinary sense of the word. It is a story of suffering transmuted, under grace, into spiritual progress.

Bill W, 1959
Letter, excerpted from *As Bill Sees It*

One member's voice

Finding freedom in surrender

A story of experience, strength, and hope

"Admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable."

"Who cares to admit complete defeat?" Bill W hit the nail squarely on the head when he wrote the opening words of *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. He answered his own question with equal force and precision, "Practically no one, of course. Every natural instinct cries out against the idea of personal powerlessness."

I, like so many others say they did, fought tooth and nail for years to prove I wasn't defeated, refusing to surrender long after the ultimate outcome was a foregone conclusion, incurring and inflicting injury upon injury, denying desperately to convince myself, "I am not one of *those* alcoholics."

Perversely, I acknowledged for years that I drank too much and would even allow that I might border on being an alcoholic. Always defiant and oddly proud, I qualified that admission with the caveat that, even at my worst, I was a "high functioning" alcoholic, and I could prove it.

In fact, I did just that many times. Recalling what I had learned in eighth-grade science, I set out to prove I wasn't a "true" alcoholic using the "scientific method," which, according to whoever writes Wikipedia, is "a systematic observation, measurement, and experiment, and the formulation, testing, and modification of hypotheses."

Aha! Science to the rescue! I stated my hypothesis in the designated style: "If I can go 90 days without drinking, I am not an alcoholic." Then, after systematic observation and measurement, just as I hypothesized, I went 90 days without drinking and proved beyond doubt that I was not alcoholic.

Of course, the 90 days time frame was totally arbitrary and baseless, and I had

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Tradition One

Easy to write about. A challenge to live.

"Our common welfare should come first. Personal recovery depends on AA unity.

If you have the opportunity to travel and see what is happening in the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in other areas of the United States, you get to see for yourself just how fortunate we are to live and stay sober in Marion Country, an area where the quality of life in AA is alive and well.

This is not so everywhere. For the first time in the history of AA, the number of members in the fellowship is actually declining. Some of us feel this is a direct reflection of how the AA traditions are practiced.

I was in Connecticut recently and found that in some areas there are no Intergroup or central offices or volunteers to work them. The number and frequency of meetings there are diminishing at an alarming rate.

In many groups, more emphasis is placed on reading the ninth step promises than on reading the traditions.

Like the steps, the traditions are in a specific order, and Tradition One, like Step One, is of primary importance to all that follow.

Tradition One emphasizes unity. Just as the alcoholic who takes a drink loses all hope for just as long as he or she continues to drink, the group or area that doesn't practice Tradition One is doomed to failure as well.

The longer form of Tradition One tells us this is so: "Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. AA must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterwards."

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Congratulations January Birthdays!

This issue we celebrate a collective **425 years** — more than **155,125 days of sobriety**. One day at a time!

Barbara T	36 years	Ryan S	4 years	Aaron	1 year
Bill L	32 years	Alex W	3 years	Lynsey	1 year
Joureen P	31 years	Angela E	3 years	Michelle S	1 year
Judy L	29 years	Cindy C	3 years		
Bill H	28 years	Josh G	3 years		
Wes H	22 years	Patti B	3 years		
Charlie T	20 years	Ray D	3 years		
Lewis G	19 years	Sonja C	3 years		
Jon D	18 years	Alexandra C	2 years		
Charles J	15 years	Charlie D	2 years		
Katie H	15 years	DeEtta	2 years		
Larry B	15 years	Diane C	2 years		
Bob L	13 years	Jim S	2 years		
Karen H	11 years	Michael S	2 years		
Ebbo K	6 years	Sequoia	2 years		
Richie M	4 years	Sue P	2 years		

DECEMBER 2011

Jacques	37 years
Lou	18 years
Kelly O'	7 years
Mike S	5 years
Aaron	1 years
Devin	1 years
Troy	1 years

Deadline for birthdays is the 20th of the preceding month.
Email: thevoice@aaocalamarion.org
Or phone: 352-867-0660

Join the Birthday Club

Celebrate an AA anniversary—yours or another member's—with a contribution. Send name, sobriety date, years of sobriety, and a donation — suggested is $1, $5, or $10 for each year of sobriety to:

Intergroup District 17
3666A N.E. 25th Street
Ocala, Florida 34470

Finding Freedom

From page 1

conveniently forgotten the part from eighth-grade science that says, "Scientific inquiry is generally intended to be as objective as possible and to reduce biased interpretation." But who reads the fine print?

For nearly 25 years, I periodically repeated that experiment, and always to the same satisfying result. 90 days. No drinking. Not an alcoholic.

As it turns out, there's something to this scientific method after all. In 2006, after spending a couple of years on a liter-or-more-of-vodka-a-day bender, I decided it was time to run the experiment again. All indicators said I should: no bath in eight days, hardly any food, passed out on the couch except to get another drink. My family distraught, bills unpaid, clients irate, and a relationship in free fall.

Time for the scientific solution, again. I abruptly stopped drinking, and four days later my body, then in full-blown withdrawal, rebelled into total system failure. Another 10 days later, by the grace of my higher power and the skill of his trusted servants in the medical professions, I awoke in intensive care barely alive.

In that hospital bed, unable to walk, eat, or even urinate on my own and barely able to breathe unaided, I discovered powerlessness. Finally, after years of scientific experimentation, I found truth. I had proven my hypothesis wrong, which is a perfectly legitimate outcome of the scientific method. I had demonstrated conclusively: I was powerless over alcohol. My life had become unmanageable in every conceivable way. I was a true alcoholic.

I don't recommend this method of discovery to others, but beginning with that miracle of survival, an unbroken string of miracles brought me to Alcoholics Anonymous and has kept me coming back for more one day at a time ever since. Some may not see the mundane events as miraculous. I see them as nothing less.

First, there was a strange little man who came to my bedside in the hospital and told me I should never drink again and handed me a sheet of paper with some phone numbers on it. I first called the number of a highly respected recovery program, and the counselor who answered said the program didn't have any openings, but suggested that I try Alcoholics Anonymous. She then matter-of-factly acknowledged that she was an alcoholic in recovery and that AA is where she got and stays sober. Zap — the miracle of carrying the message.

She suggested I call Intergroup 17 in Ocala, Florida. I wanted nothing to do with AA, but desperation had set in. I hesitatingly punched in the digits. The warm voice of the person on the phone at Intergroup reassured me that there was a solution and directed me to my first AA meeting. Zap, I was Twelfth-Stepped!

At that first meeting, I encountered a roomful of incredibly diverse — in every sense of the word —people didn't seem to care at all that I obviously didn't want to be there and most likely didn't want to get to know them either. They just welcomed me in. As I gazed around the room, I noticed a carved wooden sign nailed above the door, "You are not alone now." Zap, the power of the fellowship.

Those people — now my home group — shared their experiences, and as I listened, I heard them tell to my surprise parts of my story. I heard in their stories my own pain, my despair, my desperation. They didn't stop there. They also shared their strength and hope, and miraculously in that one hour, I came to the realization of who I was. I knew I was one of them. I knew I was home. Zap. Zap. Zap.

What irony. I who fought so hard against defeat found in surrender a power greater than myself who can restore me to sanity. I have found a happiness, joy, and freedom I never knew could exist just by admitting that I am powerless over alcohol and that may life has become unmanageable.

I gratefully and humbly acknowledge the existence of that higher power who lives just beyond Step One every time I say the most liberating words I have or ever will say, "My name is Max. I am an alcoholic."

Max R
Ocala, Florida
January 2012

The views, expressions, and opinions presented by individual members are those of the author and not necessarily those of Alcoholics Anonymous or Intergroup 17.

District 17 Corner

Area 14
North Florida Area Assembly
January 14-15, 2011
St. Augustine

GSRs plan now to attend.
All members welcome.
Tentative Schedule. Subject to Change.

Saturday January 14, 2011
8:00 am - 5:30 pm Registration
9:00 am - 4:15 pm Workshops
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm Dinner
7:30 pm - 9:30 pm Agenda items meeting

Sunday January 15, 2011
8:00 am - 9:00 am Registration
9:00 am - 12:00 pm Business Meeting

Full Agenda Online
www.aanorthflorida.org/assembly_agenda

Location and Hotel Reservations
The Renaissance Resort,
500 South Legacy Trail,
St. Augustine, Florida 320921
Tel: 904-940-8000
Link to online booking at:
www.aanorthflorida.org/assembly_agenda

District 17 to Host Registration

North Florida Area Assembly
January 14-15, 2011

Volunteers needed to staff the registration desk.

To volunteer or for more information:
Phone: 352 867-0660
Email: district17@aaocalamarion.org

See column to the left for more details on the Area 14 meeting.

DISTRICT 17 TREASURER SOUGHT

District 17 is seeking a volunteer to serve as District Treasurer. Simple bookkeeping and budget management skills needed. Two years of sobriety required. If you love service, learn more. Call 352 867-0660 or attend the next District 17 meeting, January 29, St. Mark's Methodist Church.

Urgent Need. Women to take meetings to prisons.

Corrections Committee needs women volunteers to take meetings into local correctional institutions. The need is critical. The service is great. Apply now. For more information, contact Lori M. through Intergroup 17 at 352-867-0660.

To Contact District 17
To contact a District 17 officer, service chair, or GSR, call 352.867.0660 or email:
district17@aaocalamarion.org

New Meeting
Joy of Living
Starting January 2, 2012
Weekdays, Noon to 1 pm
Monday -Thursday Closed Discussion
Fridays, Closed Beginner
Ocala West
United Methodist Church
9330 SW 105th Street
Ocala, Florida

Upcoming Area Events

- **North Florida Area Assembly** January 14-15, 2012, St. Augustine, FL www.aanorthflorida.org/assembly_agenda
- **District 17 Monthly Meeting** ***January 29,*** 6 pm. St. Marks UMC,

Easy to write about. A challenge to live.

Continued from page 1

The traditions protect us from each other. Gossip, mean–spirited inventories of others, arguing for arguments sake, and a false sense of superiority degrade our unity.

It is easy to write about Tradition One, but quite another challenge actually to live it. The ego says: "I know the right way this should be done. I should be able to talk about anything I want. "The world is changing; these old fashioned AA ideas and ideals have to change as well."

Really? These old AA ideas and ideals have stood us well for over a half a century. That's why we call them "traditions." They will continue to serve us well, just as long as we consciously put our common welfare first. Quite an order for the self-centered.

Prepared by Bob C

The thoughts, expressions, and opinions of individuals who write for The Voice are not necessarily those of Intergroup 17 or Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

Intergroup Insights

Happy New Year !!

Another year is here and there is so much to be grateful for especially another day of sobriety. Thank you to the desk volunteers, after hours team, the guys who painted the office, and the picnic volunteers.

Would you consider becoming a desk worker, or serve on the after hours phone team, be a part of the web site committee, write an article for The Voice, or add your name to the 12 Step call list, or speaker list?

These are some of the ways you can give back to Alcoholics Anonymous. Call 352-867-0660 or email, aaocalaintergroup@gmail.com. What a great way to start the New Year!

Connie C
Intergroup District 17
Office Manager

The Voice by Email

Subscribe for free.
Send an e-mail with "Free Voice" in the subject line to:
thevoice@aaocalamarion.org

The Voice by e-mail is sent anonymously in PDF format. No one else can see your email address. Requires Adobe Reader software. Printed copies available at Intergroup office.

A more compact, leaner Voice

You may have noticed *The Voice* is quite a bit leaner this issue. The Intergroup Steering Committee voted on this change at its last meeting as a cost savings measure. For additional information about Intergroup and local meetings and happenings, please visit our website:
www.aaocalamarion.org

Group Contributions to Intergroup 17
November 2011

Intergroup 17's fiscal year runs June 2011-May 2012.
Contributions below are from June 1, 2010 through November 30, 2011.
Please report any errors or discrepancies to Intergroup 17.

GROUP NAME	Nov '11 Contributions	Contributions 6/1/11-11/30/11
11th Step Group		$ 50.00
164 Pages Group		167.50
Acceptance		
Alive and Well		50.00
All You Need Group		45.00
As Bill Sees It		247.25
Belleview Eye Opener	$50.00	100.00
Belleview God's Way		5.02
Belleview Group		
Breakfast Club	.34	1,265.84
Cabin in the Woods		200.00
Came To Believe	.21	48.37
Citra Group	.	.82
Come As You Are		
Conscious Contact		77.56
Experience, Strength & Hope		
Forest Group		20.07
Forest Men's Group		75.57
Fort McCoy Group	40.68	40.68
Fountain of Gratitude		
Free To Be		10.00
Fresh Start	.	.26
Grace Group		0.07
Grateful Gals		35.00
Grupo Mano Abierta		
Happy Hour Group		
Happy, Joyous & Free	130.25	1,225.80
Headstart Group		102.96
Healing Group		30.00
It's In The Book		
It's Not Them Group		.31
Keep It Green		
Keep It Simple		355.65
Last Call Group		100.00
Lifesaver Group		153.23
Living Sober Group		35.05
Lunch Bunch Group		
Marion Oaks Group		1.69
McIntosh Group	20.00	20.00
Men's Group Ocala		262.50
New Attitudes Group		0.27
No Name Group		45.00
Ocala Group	237.43	556.90
One Day at a Time	200.00	325.41
Primary Purpose Group		39.00
Shores of Sobriety		59.27
Sisters of Serenity		75.00
Serenity Group		
Sober Yankees		100.00
Start A New Life		200.00
Strength In Numbers		10.00
Summerfield Group		
Sundae Social Group		
TLC Group, The Centers		
Together We Can		5.00
We Give Up		50.00
Weir Crazy	40.00	60.09
Westside Recovery	100.00	100.00
Young People's Group		
Zion-Blichton Group	12.00	61.12
Archives		
District 17		219.62
Birthday Club (personal)	34.00	34.00
Faithful 5-ers (personal)	5.00	35.00
Individuals members	60.12	154.96
Total	**$784.03**	**$7294.64**

Looking for more information about AA and the local fellowship?

Visit www.aaocalamarion.org

- **Information for the newcomer**
- ***Where and When* meetings list**
- **Schedule of events**
- **Volunteer opportunities**
- ***The Voice*, all issues**
- **Much, much more**

How Groups and Individuals Support the Work of AA

Below is an example of the break down in contributions if your District has an Intergroup office. This is taken from the information pamphlet:*

"SELF-SUPPORT:
WHERE MONEY & SPIRITUALITY MIX"

50% Intergroup District 17 Inc.
3666A NE 25th Street
Ocala, FL 34470

30% AA General Service Office
P.O. Box 459
6035 E. Tudor St.
New York, NY 10164

10% North Florida Area Conference
5205 N. Sonora Terrace
Beverly Hills FL 34465

10% District 17
P.O. Box 3081
Ocala, FL 34478

*AA General Service Conference approved literature

Intergroup 17 Call Center November 2011

Meeting info requests	92
Office transactions	63
Twelfth Step Calls	3
Visitors	44
Al-Anon	5
Miscellaneous	59

Live by the books? Buy the books!

Find a complete selection of AA conference approved literature and much more available at the Inter-group office,