



The Voice



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April 2013

www.aocalamarion.org

Volume 32, Issue 4

Intergroup District 17-3666A N.E. 25th St., Ocala, FL 34470 - aocalaintergroup@gmail.com - 352-867-0660

Open Weekdays 10:00 am-5:00 pm and Saturday 10:00am-2:00pm

Intergroup Reps meet at the Intergroup office Sunday, Apr. 14, 4:30 pm. Steering Committee meeting follows.

Step Four: "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

When turning our will and life over to the care of God in the third step page 63, we were informed in our book that this step will have little, permanent effect unless "at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and be rid of the things in ourselves that had been blocking us", page 64.

Our Big Book states that resentment is the number one offender; it goes on to tell us we have been spiritually sick. When the spiritual malady is overcome we straighten out mentally and physically. (Our liquor is but a symptom.) That means if you follow the twelve steps, the obsession to drink will be removed. Our Big Book only mentions "recovering" once in the chapter, The Family Afterwards. "Recovered" can be found throughout the book beginning with the cover page, so our goal is to **recover** from a hopeless state of mind and body.

The Big Book gives us definite directions beginning on page 65. The fourth column can be found on page 67 by answering a simple question. Can you find this question? There are many ideas and much advice floating around the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous and Treatment Centers; however the wisest suggestions are already outlined for us in the Big Book. On page 65, it states "we were usually as definite as this example"... the referenced three columns.

This process is a **simple outline**; we do not write an autobiography. One needs to write just enough information on paper to nudge our memory for the experience and effect of Step Five. The fallacy of documenting your entire life has kept many alcoholics from completing this step, and it should take only a few hours, no more. I have sponsored men that after weeks of working on only this one step are no closer to completion, than they were the day of their third step, simply because they heeded opinions and ideas contrary to what is written in our Big Book. In the early days of our written Book, these steps were followed and completed in **one day** rather than over a period of weeks or months as is the custom today, with much greater success in **Recovery**, than we have today. Working one step a month is often heard in the rooms today, or the stated direction of working your Fourth step for months. This is erroneous and contrary to the simple guidelines in our recovery text; it often implies to our newcomer to live in pain and suffering longer than necessary.

We hope you follow the simple program outlined in our "Alcoholics Anonymous" Big Book and **Recover** as rapidly as was intended.

On Tradition Four: "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other group or A.A. as a whole."

Long form: "*With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the trustees of The Alcoholic Foundation. On such issues our common welfare is paramount.*"

This Tradition, Number 4, is a specific application of general principles already outlined in Traditions 1 and 2. Tradition 1 states, "*Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.*" Tradition 2 states, "*For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.*" With these concepts in mind, let us look more closely at Tradition 4. The first sentence of Tradition 4 guarantees each A.A. group local autonomy. With respect to its own affairs, the group may make any decisions, adopt any attitudes that it likes. No over-all or intergroup authority should challenge this primary privilege. We feel this ought to be so, even though the group might sometimes act with complete indifference to our tradition. For example, an A.A. group could, if it wished, hire a paid preacher and support him out of the proceeds of a group night club. Though such an absurd procedure would be miles outside our tradition, the group's "right to be wrong" would be held inviolate. We are sure that each group can be granted, and safely granted, these most extreme privileges. We know that our familiar process of trial and error would summarily eliminate both the preacher and the night club. Those severe growing pains which invariably follow any radical departure from A.A. tradition can be absolutely relied upon to bring an erring group back into line. An A.A. group need not be coerced by any human government over and above its own members. Their own experience, plus A.A. opinion in surrounding groups, plus God's prompting in their group conscience would be sufficient. Much travail has already taught us this. >Page 2

Hence we may confidently say to each group, "You should be responsible to no other authority than your own conscience." Yet please note one important qualification. It will be seen that such extreme liberty of thought and action applies only to the group's own affairs. Rightly enough, this Tradition goes on to say, "But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, these groups ought to be consulted." Obviously, if any individual, group or regional committee could take an action which might seriously affect the welfare of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, or seriously disturb surrounding groups, that would not be liberty at all. It would be sheer license; it would be anarchy, not democracy.

Therefore, we A.A.s have universally adopted the principle of consultation. This means that if a single A.A. group wishes to take any action which might affect surrounding groups, it consults them. Or, if there be one, it confers with the intergroup committee for the area. Likewise, if a group or regional committee wishes to take any action that might affect A.A. as a whole, it consults the trustees of The Alcoholic Foundation, who are, in effect, our over-all General Service Committee. For instance, no group or intergroup could feel free to initiate, without consultation, any publicity that might affect A.A. as a whole. Nor could it assume to represent the whole of Alcoholics Anonymous by printing and distributing anything purporting to be A.A. standard literature. This same principle would naturally apply to all similar situations. Though there is no formal compulsion to do so, all undertakings of this general character are customarily checked with our A.A. General Headquarters.

This idea is clearly summarized in the last sentence of Tradition 4, which observes, "On such issues our common welfare is paramount."

Bill W.

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Mark your calendar.....

April Fool's Day Dance

Fri., Apr. 1, 9 pm – 12 am
Lost & Found Club
2315 NE 29th Terr. 34470
\$4.00 admission, No one is
turned away.
Fri., April 12, Bingo 9:00 pm

Intergroup Rep Meeting

Sun., April 14, 4:30 pm
3666A NE 25th St.
Ocala, FL 34470
Steering Committee follows.

Spring into Sobriety (SIS)

Conference for Women in
Recovery Helmsley Sandcastle,
Lido Beach, FL Fri., Apr. 19,
2 pm – Sun., Apr. 21, Noon.
www.SIS.conference.com

District 17 Meeting

Thurs., April 25, 6:45 pm
St. Mark's United Methodist
1839 NE 8th Rd., 34470
G.S.R's are encouraged to
attend.

District 27 Spring Picnic

Hosted by Williston Winners
Sat., Apr. 20, 10 am – 4 pm
Henry Beck Park
3770 County Highway 343
Gulf Hammock, FL 32369

**Florida Bid for ICYPAA &
SERCYPAA** Campfire fun &
Field Day Apr. 26-28 @ at
campsite near Talahassee, FL

"Singleness of Purpose" Workshop

Hosted by
District 24
April 27, Noon - 4:00 pm
Lions Club 318 Osceola St.
Palatka, FL 32177. Meet,
Greet & Eat
Noon - 12:30 pm
Speaker Frank B. of Ocala
Five member panel
presentation 1:30 pm -3:00
pm followed by
an "Ask It" Basket session.

18th Annual Country Round-Up

Apr. 26 – 28 Ag Center
1424 Jackson Ave. (Hwy.90)
Chipley, FL 32482
Speakers:
Wayne B., Chicago, Ill./Santa
Monica, CA
Misoon W., Jacksonville, FL
Tim E., Cordele, GA
Sid B., Panama City, FL
Darlene B. Al-Anon of
Panama City, FL
Voice: Larry K., Dothan, AL
More info call: 334.372.7979,
850.768.0311, 850.768.0457

Email: Chipley_countryroundup@hotmail.com

The Woodstock of A.A. 23rd Annual Spring Conference of Cocoa Beach

International Palms Resort
and Conference Center 1300
N. Atlantic Ave.
Cocoa Beach, FL 32931
321.783.2271
Speakers: Doug R., Tujunga,
CA, Sandy B. of Tampa, FL,
Howard P., Gilbert, AZ,
Charlie P., Austin TX, Carla
R., Tujunga, CA, Bob B., St.
Paul, MN, Bob D., Las Vegas,
NV Conference info:
407.273.1646, email:
gyeldell@cfl.rr.com

9th Annual "Miracles in May" Celebration

on
beautiful Lake Weir. Hosted
by the Weir Crazy Group
Wed., May 8, Cookout 6 pm
Speaker 7 pm Sheryl R. of
Spring Hill, FL
St. John's Lutheran
10495 Sunset Harbor Rd
Summerfield, FL 34491

Celebrating the 78th year
anniversary of the Meeting of
Bill W. and Dr. Bob
Bring your favorite dish or
dessert to share.

FCYPAA239 May 31 – June 2
FCYPAA2013.COM
Sanibel Harbour Marriott
Resort & Spa 17260 Harbour
Pointe Dr., Ft. Myers, FL
33908

District 14 Archives Committee Presents Founder's Day 2013

June 8, Sat., 4 pm – 10 pm
History Speaker: Chet P.
Speaker: Karen R. (Author of
"Crossing the River of
Denial" Trinity United
Methodist 4000 NW 53rd
Ave. Gainesville, FL Please
bring a covered dish to
share. \$5.00 in advance.
Dinner & Dance & 50/50

Founders' Day Herald 78th Anniversary of Alcoholics

Anonymous June 7 – 9,
Akron, OH
www.akronaa.org

Our most sincere condolences to the family and friends of Leonard "Lenny" Anderson from the New Attitudes Group.
He helped many people in all his years of sobriety and will be greatly missed. Funeral services to be announced.

7th Tradition Addresses. How Groups and Individuals Support the Work of AA.

*Below is the financial guideline AA World Services suggests to groups that have an Intergroup office in their area.**

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

30% General Service Office
P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10164
Checks payable to: GSO

10% North Florida Area Conference
P.O. Box 360831
Melbourne, FL 32936
Checks payable to: NFAC

10% District 17
P.O. Box 3081
Ocala, FL 34478
Checks payable to:
District 17

**From Where Money & Spirituality Mix, AA General Service Conference-approved literature*

From the DCM:

The end of March was a busy time. March 24th I attended a workshop hosted by District 24. Our Area 14 Delegate, Marilyn B. gave a bullet point presentation of items she will be voting on at the upcoming General Service Conference at the end of April. Thom F., Doug S., Ken W. also attended.

March 30-31 was the North Florida Area Conference (NFAC). NFAC is a great time of fellowship and learning how AA works in the Area and the General Service Board (etc.). For me, it is humbling, that the Groups are always foremost in the Officers and Committee Service Coordinators thoughts and actions. I saw it at work first hand Saturday, March 30. All of the area DCMs and GSRs were in a meeting to get a "substantial unanimity" on the various issues that Marilyn B. will be voting on at the upcoming General Conference. One of the discussion points was whether or not to add and index to the Big Book. The vote was "yes." A minority opinion was called for. Several people voiced their concerns about adding an index. One of District 17's GSR, DeEtta G. from Happy, Joyous and Free went to the microphone. Her opinion to NOT add the index helped sway the vote against. So, if you think your thoughts and opinions don't matter...think again. In attendance at NFAC we had four (4) GSRs, one (1) Alt. GSR, District Registrar, District Secretary, three (3) visitors, Intergroup Office Manager and her Asst. Manager, DCM and Alt. DCM. Hopefully we can encourage other groups to support their GSRs to attend. Five GSRs out of more than 60 groups is a very low percentage. Thank you for allowing me to be your trusted servant for District 17.

Carson F.

ACCEPTANCE

Ask yourself this simple question. "Do I need a treatment program because I finally accepted that my life had become unmanageable?" No? Not sure? Maybe your spouse or another family member or partner nagged you or begged you or threatened you to get help. Perhaps you were court-ordered to seek treatment or face jail time. Or your boss delivered an ultimatum – get sober or get fired.

Never mind the reason. Until you truly accept your alcoholism and admit your disease to yourself and surrender, you can't be helped. I should know. It took me nearly 30 years to finally get honest with myself and confess I was powerless over alcohol. For me, the key to opening the door of recovery was honesty. And honesty continues to be my biggest challenge everyday even after more than 2 ½ years of sobriety. I must persevere with being honest with myself – and someone else - if I have any hope of remaining sober.

Admitting defeat is never easy and always painful. But when I finally, repeat finally, came clean about my drinking to my family...and then my sponsor and my AA fellows and took Step 1, my life became simpler. It was as if a swelling tsunami of emotion had dissipated and washed away. Today, I accept life on life's terms – not mine. I try to concentrate on what I can change in me - not what I think needs to be changed around me.

Recovery is the goal that will ultimately lead to a productive life, and it is achievable with loving and trusting help from the fellowship of AA, a sponsor, support groups, even family, but ultimately finding and believing in God and a Higher Power when that time comes.

Without accepting our powerlessness over alcohol, however, we can never be functional and productive and are eventually destined for prison, institutionalization, or even death.

So ask yourself again, "has my life become unmanageable because of alcohol?" If you think 'yes' then maybe it's time you got honest with yourself before it's too late. A closed mouth never gets fed. Help is ready when you are. Just accept it and ask for it.

Barry P.

Concept IV: *Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional "Right of Participation," taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge. We perform our service tasks better "when we are sure we belong- when our participation" assures us we are truly 'trusted servants' described in Tradition Two.*

