



Intergroup District 17
Ocala, Marion County, Florida

The Hand of AA
24-Hour Hotline
365 Days a Year
352-867-0660

The Voice

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www.aaocalamarion.org

December 2013



OFFICE CLOSED

Dec. 24, 25, 31 & Jan. 1

Intergroup District 17, Inc.

3666A NE 25th Street

Ocala, FL 34470

Phone: 352-867-0660

Open: Mon.-Fri. 10am to 5pm

Sat. 10am to 2pm

Step Twelve - 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.

Step 12 gives us a guarantee — a promise that if we take the first eleven Steps, we will have a spiritual awakening. The result of working these Steps is just that: a spiritual awakening. We have tapped the “unsuspected inner resource” of strength by working these Steps, and our spirit is awakened. (BB pp. 569-570)

This is all the message is. It is very simple: *Here is a program that works.*

Throughout the Big Book, Bill talks about a “sudden spiritual experience” which effected his recovery and influenced his writing and the focus of the book. Later on, when they were putting out the second edition, a lot of people asked him not to emphasize his sudden spiritual experience because they thought many people might feel they would have to have the same type of spiritual experience in order to recover. So he changed the term to “spiritual awakening.” The distinction is that a “spiritual experience” happens suddenly, and a “spiritual awakening” happens more gradually. It doesn’t matter which we have (far more people have the gradual kind of spiritual awakening”, but we are *promised* that if we work these Steps, we will become spiritually awakened.

Continued page 2—>



Living Sober Group

invites all sober friends to a
New Year's Eve Celebration

7:30pm Speaker meeting

Followed by Food, Music,

Cards, Fun and Fellowship

Please bring finger food to

share (chips & dips, meatballs,

salads, tapas, peanuts, or stuff

to snack on) Sandwiches, Cold

Drinks & Coffee provided.

Tradition Twelve - Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Editorial by Bill W. A.A. Grapevine, November 1948

"We of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of Anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all."

One may say that anonymity is the spiritual base, the sure key to all the rest of our Traditions. It has come to stand for prudence and, most importantly, for self-effacement. True consideration for the newcomer if he desires to be nameless; vital protection against misuse of the name Alcoholics Anonymous at the public level; and to each of us a constant reminder that principles come before personal interest -- such is the wide scope of this all embracing principle. In it we see the cornerstone of our security as a movement; at a deeper spiritual level it points us to still greater self-renunciation.

A glance at the 12 Traditions will instantly assure anyone that "giving up" is the essential idea of them all. In each Tradition, the individual or the group is asked to give up something for our general welfare.

Tradition One asks us to place the common good ahead of personal desire.

Tradition Two asks us to listen to God as He may speak in the Group Conscience.

Tradition Three requires that we exclude *no* alcoholic from A.A. membership.

Tradition Four implies that we abandon all idea of centralized human authority or government. But each group is enjoined to consult widely in matters affecting us all.

Tradition Five restricts the A.A. group to a single purpose, for

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The Voice by
email for free.



Send an e-mail with

"Free Voice" in the subject line to:

thevoice@aaocalamarion.org

The Voice by e-mail is sent to you
anonymously in PDF format. No one

else can see your email address.

Requires Adobe Reader software.

Print copies available at the

Intergroup office.

I believe there are as many different experiences of spiritual awakening as there are people. It is a very personal thing. God knows that no two people are alike. Each person is going to have a unique spiritual experience or a unique spiritual awakening that will fit his or her particular life. Each one will be like no other, but they all will have something in common: *we will be able to think, believe, and feel things that we couldn't before*. We will be able to do things we couldn't do on our own strength. We can receive God's directions in our lives; we have had a spiritual awakening.

This is what we carry to other people. Remember that we said if we can believe in Step 2, and decide in Step 3 and act in Steps 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, we will get the Promises in Step 9 and results in Step 10, and the results of prayer and meditation in Step 11.

Now we *know*. We are people who have faith. We have seen the program work for us, and those of us who know from our own experience that it works can go to the new person and help him or her come to believe. Our faith and our knowledge can enable him to believe. We have to be careful, though, because we can't make him willing. He has to become willing on his own, through his problem. If he has had enough of what he has been experiencing, and he is willing to let go of it, then we can step in and say, "This is what worked for me."

A lot of times we try to get people to believe who are not willing yet. This is something the individual has to do on his own; he has to go through his own suffering to become willing to change.

This is our message, and it is simple. Our responsibility is to carry the message—what others do with it is not our responsibility. Recovery comes through a vital spiritual experience as a result of these Steps. I think this is the only way to recovery. Our job is not someone else's recovery; our job is simply to carry the message. When you look at it, it seems like a small, insignificant thing we are asked to do: not to pro-

mote the recovery, not to effect the recovery, but to carry the recovery message.

I think sometimes we miss the boat. We want to *carry* the message and also *carry out* the message. Then when the person doesn't recover or doesn't respond to the message, we assume responsibility. We need to remember that the recovery comes through the message, through power of the Step, and not through the messenger. Our job is simply to tell people.

The twelfth Step is about faith. When we talk to a new person we don't talk about anything we "believe," we talk about what we have *known through experience*. We talk about what we have *known through experience*. We talk about facts that have brought results in our lives. Remember where his is, though. He can't sit there and get our faith. It is often frustrating because we wish that he knew what we know, that we could just give him the knowledge we have.

The new person has to start where we started. Sometimes it is helpful to remember how *we* thought in the beginning. He has to start wherever he is and go through the Steps on his own just as we did. One day he will know it works, and one day he can tell another person. This is the chain reaction that has taken place in the fifty years since the beginnings of this program in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Here is an irony that shows the power of God. We have taken the problem—whatever it was we were powerless over, whatever was destroying our self-worth, destroying our lives, giving us guilt and fear and shame, and making us feel like a zero—and finally become willing to let go of it. We have come to believe, have made a decision, and have taken the actions. Then after we have gotten God's direction in our lives, we come to the twelfth Step, and we find out *the thing that seemed the worst, that we hated the most, is really the jewel of our life*. In the end it is the only thing we have enough understanding of to offer to the rest of the world.

We can now sit down with another person who has a problem similar to our own and convey an understanding that no one else can. We can say to him or her, "I've been there." Because of our experience we can cross barriers of race, religion and every other kind, and we can understand each other in a very special and meaningful way.

There are often people we want to help but can't because we don't get to choose. I'm glad we don't have the right to choose who we help, because I might not have been chosen. It is still the miracle of our programs that we can come together as we do and share our experience, strength, and hope, and watch each other get well.

One of the hardest situations we face is with our family members. We would all like to "save" the members of our families, but often we can't. I had one brother, and he was an alcoholic. I sobered up one March, and he died right after Christmas the same year. He was thirty-seven years old. I was thirty-four. He never saw me after I got sober. I've been able to help with a lot of people since then, but I never was given the opportunity to help my brother. There are a lot of things I can't figure out; this is one of them.

A guy who helped me get sober was drunk six weeks after we got out of the hospital, and was killed in a car wreck drunk ten years later. At the time we were together in the hospital, he was very interested in the program and trying to get me interested in it. I don't understand God's will. Some of us are chosen through our problem, and our recovery teaches us the program of action to recover. Each time a person gets well through this program, he or she has the responsibility to take the message to other people who still suffer in the same situation.

IN all the other Steps, Steps 1 through 11, we have received something, all culminating in Step 11. But in Step 12 we are told to give it all away. So eleven Steps give to us and one we give away. We can see the power of what it's like to be blessed when we give rather than receive.

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Tradition Twelve..... from page 1
example, carrying our message to other alcoholics.

Tradition Six points at the corroding influence of money, property and personal authority; it begs that we keep these influences at a minimum by separate incorporation and management of our special services. It also warns against the natural temptation to make alliances or give endorsements.

Tradition Seven states that we had best pay our own bills; that large contributions or those carrying obligations ought not be received; that public solicitation using the name Alcoholics Anonymous is positively dangerous.

Tradition Eight forswears professionalizing our Twelfth Step work but it does guarantee our few paid service workers an unquestioned amateur status.

Tradition Nine asks that we give up all idea of expensive organization; enough is needed to permit effective work by our special services--and no more. This Tradition breathes democracy; our leadership is one of service and it is rotating; our few titles never clothe their holders with arbitrary personal authority; they hold authorizations *to serve, never to govern*.

Tradition Ten is an emphatic restraint of serious controversy; it implores each of us to take care against committing A.A. to the fires of reform, political or religious dissension.

Tradition Eleven asks, in our public relations, that we be alert against sensationalism and it declares there is never need to praise ourselves. Personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and film is urgently required, thus avoiding the pitfall of vanity, and the temptation through broken anonymity to link A.A. to other causes.

Tradition Twelve, in its mood of humble anonymity, plainly enough comprehends the preceding eleven. The "Twelve Points of Tradition" are little else than a specific application of the spirit of the "Twelve Steps of Recovery" to our group life and to our relations with society in general. The Recovery Steps would make each

individual A.A. whole and one with God; the Twelve Points of Tradition would make us one with each other and whole with the world about us. Unity is our aim.

Our A.A. Traditions are, we trust, securely anchored in those wise precepts: charity, gratitude and humility. Nor have we forgotten *prudence*. May these virtues ever stand clear before us in our meditations; may Alcoholics Anonymous serve God in happy unison for so long as He may need us.

Bill W.

Step Twelve..... from page 2

When I look back at my own life, I see that the first eleven Steps brought an amazing change in my life and gave me a spiritual experience. But when I look back over the past twenty-seven years of working with others I know I have grown far more from carrying the message than I grew through the first eleven Steps. This—Step 12—is the growth Step.

At the end of Step 12, it says "to practice these principles in all our affairs." Throughout the Big Book, Bill W. refers to the Twelve Steps as "principles." In the forward of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions he says, "The twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous are a set of principles, spiritual in nature, which if practiced will expel the obsession to drink." I think the best word for the principles is "laws." I think these are laws that have been created by something beyond man, and they are just as basic and unchanging as the law of gravity or the freezing point of water. Water always freezes at thirty-two degrees; we can depend on it. We can just as confidently depend on these laws that are within our Steps.

The Twelve Steps are a design for living. They are a set of principles (or laws or directions) that tell us how a human being should live. If we can live by these principles, we will be peaceful and content. We will be free from the things that used to enslave us and make our lives miserable.

We do have self-will—we can do what we want to do—or we can

choose to live by these principles. I think the reason most people choose to live miserable lives indulging self-will is not because they are evil or bad or sinful or anything like that. I help other people because we know. We have been on both sides of these principles. We know what works, we know how it works, and this is the simplest message we try to carry. These are the basic and unchanging principles we try to practice in all our affairs.

Joe McQ.

How Groups and Individuals Support the Work of AA

Below is the example of allocation of group contributions provided by AA World Services in 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**
P.O. Box 360831
Melbourne, FL 32936-0831

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

*AA General Service Conference approved literature



Congratulations December Birthdays!

This issue we celebrate a collective **373 years** — more than 136,144 **days of sobriety** One day at a time!

Happy, Joyous & Free

Lou C. 20
 Craig M. 13
 Kelly O. 9
 Kelli S. 7
 Gordona U. 6
 Ward W. 6
 Wayne Mc. 5
 Betti J. 4
 Deb G. 4
 Peter G. 4
 Keely C. 3
 Rhonda B. 2
 Jordon H. 1
 Laura B. 1

Headstart

Lisa S. 13
 Ron F. 7
 Bob H. 8
 Max R. 7
 John I
 Matt C. I
 Laura I

Living Sober

Don C. 48
 Dawn C. 30
 Joe S. 28
 Roger D. 26
 Pam C. 21
 Diane I. 9
 Ron R. 7

Mid-Afternoon

Tom H. 33
Sober Yankees
 Phil H. 26 yrs
One Day at a Time
 Ed S. 19
 Buddy B. I
 Marsha M. I
 Tom I

Deadline for submitting birthdays is the 20th of the preceding month through the Intergroup office.

Live by the books? Buy the books! Debit & Credit Cards accepted On purchases over \$10.00

Intergroup carries a great selection of A.A. conference approved literature, CD's, DVD's and other recovery related items including a variety of medallions, pins, rings, jewelry, book covers, cards, bookmarks and gift items at affordable prices.

Special orders gladly accepted.

Bookstore Hours
 Monday-Friday, 10 to 5
 Saturday, 10 to 2
 3666A NE 25th St., Ocala

Intergroup Insights

Do you enjoy taking inventory? Every few months we count and account for all the merchandise. Call the office to volunteer. Newcomers welcome.

There is an opening for a desk volunteer on Tuesdays from 10am—2pm and Wednesdays 2pm-5pm. Could this be you? The rewards that this type of service work gives are priceless. One year of sobriety is required.

Have a happy sober holiday,
 Connie C.

Upcoming events:

Variety Show and Poker Run.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2nd Annual Serenity Scramble Golf Tournament. Also, to the hole sponsors and those who joined us for lunch. We had perfect weather conditions! Without fundraisers like these the doors would struggle to stay open.

Results: Ties were broken by a match of scorecards beginning with the team's starting hole. Everyone who competed won a prize. Top 7 places had their choice of 4 rounds of golf at the following courses. Candler Hills C.C., The Country Club at Silver Springs Shores, Lake Diamond Golf Course, Summer Glenn C.C., Ocala Golf Club, The Links at Spruce Creek South, and Ocala Palms C.C. The rest of the field received a sleeve (3) of Callaway or Nike golf balls donated by Spencer B. and Bill M.

- 1st (63): Willie A., Rick F., Jay P.
- 2nd (64): Charlie Mc., Bill J., Hank L., Mike B.
- 3rd (64): Mary D., Bonnie J., Tammy H., Connie C.
- 4th (66): Alan B., Lou C., Spencer B., Tony M.
- 5th (69): John B., Bob M., Doug S., Jim Z.
- 6th (69): John S., John T., Tom R., Graham F.
- 7th (69): Bill H., John J., Don D., Jim G.
- 8th Place (70): Glenn K., Wayne L., Mike G., Paul R.
- 9th (74): Laurent C., Raymond C., Thom F., Leo M.
- 10th (77): Rafael Q., David S., Jeff G., Ray B.
- 11th (78): Bill M., Adam F., Chase P., Shawn P.

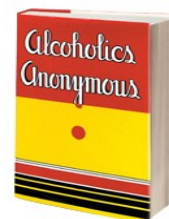
Closest to the Pin:

- #8 Don D. 6'6" - One hour massage donated by Mary D.
- #11 Tom M. 5'6"
- #16 Willie A. 4'8"
- #2 Paul R. 12'11"

Longest Drive: Hank L. 266 yards

Most Accurate Drive: Wayne L.

**Alcoholics Anonymous
 celebrates its 75th Anniversary
 by publishing a commemorative
 1st Edition of the Big Book. Pre-
 pay for your copy at Intergroup
 now. A large supply has been or-
 dered and will arrive in April.
 Cost is \$13.80.**



Intergroup District 17 Steering Committee

Chair: Carson F.
 Happy, Joyous, & Free
Co-Chair: Shawn P.
 Heavy Hitters
Secretary: Sallie C.
 Ocala Group
Treasurer: Peggy N.
 Shores of Sobriety
Members at Large
 Thom F. Last Call
 Diane I. Living Sober
 Dennis D. Breakfast Club

Intergroup 17 Call Center October 2013

Meeting information 123
 Office transactions 80
 Twelfth Step Calls 10
 Visitors 84
 Al-Anon 6

**Group Contributions to
Intergroup
October 2013
Fiscal year: 6/1/13-5/31/14**

Traditions Checklist
from the A.A. Grapevine

These questions were originally published in the A.A. Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November 1969 and ran through September 1971. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many A.A. groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.

Tradition 12- *Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.*

GROUP NAME	Oct. '13	YTD
I 64 Pages Group	30.00	70.76
All You Need Group	45.00	92.31
Anonymity Group		1.15
Bellevue God's Way		50.00
Blichton Road Group		40.00
Breakfast Club	150.00	863.05
Cabin in the Woods	150.63	150.63
Blichton Road Group		40.00
Breakfast Club	150.00	863.05
Cabin in the Woods	150.63	150.63
Eureka Group	15.00	40.00
Forest Men's Group		40.00
Fort McCoy Group	26.95	75.78
Fountain of Gratitude	30.00	30.00
Free To Be	155.00	205.00
Grateful Gals		15.50
Grupo Mano Abierta		20.00
Happy Hour Group	50.00	50.00
Happy, Joyous & Free		1279.92
Headstart Group	101.09	421.64
Healing Group		100.00
Heavy Hitters (Men's)	20.00	70.00
Joy of Living	Folded	120.00
Living Sober Group	95.00	235.00
New Attitudes Group	44.47	44.47
Ocala Group	112.54	298.10
Ocala Men's Group		399.36
One Day at a Time	200.00	500.00
Primary Purpose Group		59.00
Sober Yankees		75.87
Stop Whining & Sober Up		333.00
Strength In Numbers		43.27
We Give Up		14.00
Weir Crazy		121.00
Young People's Group		295.00
District 17	58.72	244.22
Birthday Club	38.00	202.00
Individuals members	30.50	123.64
Total	1352.90	6770.47

1. Why is it a good idea for me to place the common welfare of all A.A. members before individual welfare? What would happen to me if AA as a whole disappeared?

2. When I do not trust A.A.'s current servants, who do I wish had the authority to straighten them out?

3. In my opinions of and remarks about other A.A.'s, am I implying membership requirements other than a desire to stay sober?

4. Do I ever try to get a certain AA group to conform to my standards, not its own?

5. Have I a personal responsibility in helping an AA group fulfill its primary purpose? What is my part?

6. Does my personal behavior reflect the Sixth Tradition—or belie it?

7. Do I do all I can do to support A.A. financially? When is the last time I anonymously gave away a Grapevine subscription?

8. Do I complain about certain A.A.s' behavior—especially if they are paid to work for AA? Who made me so smart?

9. Do I fulfill all A.A. responsibilities in such a way as to please privately even my own conscience? Really?

10. Do my utterances always reflect the Tenth Tradition, or do I give A.A. critics real ammunition?

11. Should I keep my A.A. membership a secret, or reveal it in private conversation when that may help another alcoholic (and therefore me)? Is my brand of A.A. so attractive that other drunks want it?

12. What is the real importance of me among more than a million A.A.'s?

A.A. History in December

- Dec. 1, 1940 - Chicago Daily Tribune begins a series of articles on A.A. by Nall Hamilton.
- Dec. 5, 1985 - Dave B., founder of Montreal Group, dies weeks before 50th anniversary. His story was added to the 4th Edition Big Book.
- Dec. 6, 1939 - Bert the Tailor lends Works Publishing \$1000.
- Dec. 6, 1979 - Akron Beacon reports death of Henrietta Sieberling.
- Dec. 7, 1949 - Sister Ignatia received Poverello Medal on behalf of A.A.
- Dec. 10, 1975 - *Birds of a Feather* A.A. group for pilots is formed.
- Dec. 11, 1934 - Bill admitted to Towns Hospital for the fourth and last time (fall '33, '34 in summer, midsummer and final admittance).
- Dec. 11, 1941 - Dallas Morning News reports first A.A. group formed in Dallas.
- Dec. 12, 1934 - Bill has Spiritual Experience at Towns Hospital.
- Dec. 12, 1937 - Bill meets with Rockefeller Foundation and tries to get money.
- Dec. 13, 1937 - Rockland State Mental Hospital takes patients to meeting in New Jersey.
- Dec. 13 or 14, 1934 - Ebby visits Bill at Towns hospital, brings William James' book, *Varieties of Religious Experience*.
- Dec. 19, 1939 - Los Angeles hold their first A.A. meeting there.
- Dec. 20, 1945 - Rowland H. dies (he carried the Oxford Group message to Ebby).
- Dec. 27, 1893 - Rev. Samuel Shoemaker is born.
- Other December happenings with no specific date:*
- Dec. 1934 - Bill & Lois start attending Oxford Group meetings.
- Dec. 1934 to May 1935 - Bill works with alcoholics, but fails to sober any of them. Lois reminds him HE is sober.
- Dec. 1938 - Twelve Steps written.
- Nov./Dec. 1939 - Akron group withdraws from association with Oxford Group. Meetings moved from T. Henry & Clarence Williams' home to Dr. Bob and other members' homes.
- Dec. 1939 - First A.A. group in mental institution, Rockland State Hospital, NY.
- Dec. 1939 - First home meeting in Los Angeles at Kaye M.'s house.
- Dec. 1939 - Matt Talbot Club has 88 members, uses wagons to collect old furniture to recondition & sell, not A.A., used A.A. program, material, marked first effort reach alcoholics outside married, middle-class category.
- Dec. 1940 - First A.A. group formed in St. Louis, Missouri.
- Dec. 1940 - Group started Ashtabula, Ohio due to Plain Dealer articles. A.A. Cleveland has about 30 groups.
- Dec. 1948 - Dr. Bob's last major talk, in Detroit.
- Dec. 1950 - *Grapevine* article signed by both Bill and Dr. Bob recommend establishing A.A. General Service Conference.
- Dec. 1955 - *Man on the Bed* painting by Robert M. first appeared in *Grapevine*. Painting originally called *Came to Believe*.
- Dec. 1982 - Nell Wing retires from GSO after 35 years of service.

District Corner

From the District 17 DCM

The 27th Annual Gratitude Dinner hosted by District 17 was held November 9th at Our Lady of the Springs Church. The event was sold out! I heard many positive comments about the food and especially our speaker, Bill S. from Atlanta. A special thanks to Kevin D. for suggesting Bill as our guest. Many thanks go to all who volunteered with the dinner from greeters to the unsung heroes who cleaned up afterwards. There are too many to address individually as I probably would miss a name or two. Charlie T. and Lucy C. did a great job of pulling us all together for a successful evening. The profit from the event (silent auction for cakes, Sherry R's. quilt, raffles for gift baskets and 50/50) was \$1925. 75. District 17 voted to send \$500.00 each to Intergroup 17, Area 14 and GSO. The remaining \$490 will stay in the District 17 Treasury.

December 7, 2013 will be a Meet & Greet your Area Delegate, Marilyn B. Alternate Delegate, Glenn W. It will be held in the meeting area at Unity Place from 12 – 4. After the presentations there will be a Q&A time.

I encourage all GSR's to attend the monthly District Meeting. We have a faithful few who attend. I am appreciative and grateful to those few! The business of the District is decided by the few who attend. If you want to know what is going on, attend the meetings to see how the District works for the good of the AA member and the Groups. I wish all a safe and Holiday season.

Carson F.—DCM District

Mark Your Calendar

G.S.R. Workshop

December 7, Sat. 12:00—4:00pm

Unity Place, 525 NE Sanchez Ave.
Ocala 34470

For all GSR's past, present or future.
Refreshments served. **Area 14, Panel 63 Delegate Marilyn B. and Alt. Delegate Glenn W. will be the presenters.**

Intergroup Rep Meeting

Dec. 8, Sunday, 4:30 pm

3666A NE 25th St., Ocala 34470
Steering Committee Meeting follows.

Living Sober Group Speaker Meeting

Dec. 8, Sunday, 7:30pm

Jessica M.—Speaker

District 17 GSR Meeting

Dec. 19, Thursday, 6:45 pm

St. Mark's United Methodist
1839 NE 8th Rd., Ocala 34470

**For information on
Various Alca-thons during
the holidays contact
Intergroup at
(352) 867-0660**

Groups.

Are you planning a event?

Send your information to *The Voice* for publication. Reach our nearly 400 subscribers. Deadline for each issue is the 20th of the preceding month. Send to: thevoice@aaocalamarion.org

12-Step Visit From St. Nicholas

T'was the night before Christmas When I went on a bender,
Not a creature was stirring, not even a bartender.
The empties were stacked by the chimney just fine,
In hopes that St. Nick would fill them with wine.
With Mama in her kerchief and I with my booze,
We'd just settled down for a long winter's snooze.
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I put down my drink to see what the matter.

Away to the window I crawled and then stumbled
To open the shutters where I stood and just mumbled.
Then what to my bloodshot eyes should there appear
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer.

I thought it was D.T.'s and needed help quick!
I didn't know it was only St. Nick.
I poured myself another as the reindeer came
While he shouted and called them by name:

"Now Barfly! Now Wino! Now Boozer and Rummy!
On Drunkard! On Alky! On Dipso and Dummy!"
So up to the housetop St. Nicholas flew
While I pulled the pop-top on another brew.

I trembled with fear when I heard a new sound
Down the chimney came St. Nick with a bound.
His cheeks were like roses, he grinned like a possum,
His eyes, how they twinkled, his nose had rum-blossoms!



I offered him a drink, step up to the bar,
"Not today," he said, "I am now sober."
He had a clear face and a little beer belly,
That shook when he laughed like a bowl
full of jelly.

This was too much, it increased my thirst.
"Hold it!" said St. Nick, "First things first.
You don't have to drink, easy does it,
Now that wasn't too hard, was it?"

He reached in his sack and with a great fuss
He gave me the book "Alcoholics Anonymous."
"Read this 'Big Book' for a life sublime,
Follow the principles one day at a time.

"This is the best present I can give,
Twelve steps -- a new way to live.
The A.A. program keeps me sober, it's true."

Then giving a nod, up the chimney he flew.
Then I heard him exclaim as he drove out of sight,
"You now have a choice, starting tonight.
So Merry Christmas to all and to all Season's Greetings,
Don't pick up that first drink, and go to A.A. meetings!"