

Intergroup District 17
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Open: Mon.-Fri. 10am-5pm
Sat. 10am-2pm

Intergroup District 17
Ocala, Marion County, Florida

The Voice

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

352-867-0660

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January 2014

Step One: I Just Can't Do This Anymore **An isolated home drinker gets honest with himself for the first time**

The First Step of Alcoholics Anonymous: We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable—is something that I have to practice every day. We alcoholics are undisciplined, and, although I tried to convince myself and anyone who would listen to me early in my sobriety that I was different, I, too, am undisciplined. I need to do things over and over again to make them a part of my everyday behavior. I need to work this Step over and over and over again to get it right.

I started drinking when I was thirteen years old. I drank for thirty-two years. Space constraints won't allow for me to launch into a thorough, chronological drunk-a-log, so suffice it to say, I'm right where I belong here in AA.

I can tell you what it was like toward the end of my drinking days. I had turned into an isolated home drinker. I took my liquor into my office and disappeared for hours on end. I didn't drink every day, but I drank most days. Some days I'd wake up feeling so awful that I'd swear that I wouldn't drink that night, and sometimes I wouldn't. Every once in a while I could actually put two days in a row like that together, but I was miserable. Most days, however, come 5 P.M., I'd be drinking again. If it was one of those days I wasn't drunk, I'd be terribly hung over or simply unbearable to be around.

My wife and two teenaged kids avoided me. We seldom had guests or friends over. If we did go out, I'd either have to have several primers to take the edge off so that I could stand being around other people, or, if the situation called for me to be sober, I'd act like a child and pout—in other words, I was

Continued page 3—>

Tradition One - "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity."

The A.A. Grapevine, December, 1947—Editorial by Bill W.

"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."

Our whole A.A. program is securely founded on the principle of humility—that is to say, perspective. Which implies, among other things, that we relate ourselves rightly to God and to our fellows; that we each see ourselves as we really are—"a small part of a great whole." Seeing our fellows thus, we shall enjoy group harmony. That is why A.A. Tradition can confidently state, "Our common welfare comes first."

"Does this mean," some will ask, "that in A.A. the individual doesn't count too much? Is he to be swallowed up, dominated by the group?"

No, it doesn't seem to work out that way. Perhaps there is no society on earth more solicitous of personal welfare, more careful to grant the individual the greatest possible liberty of belief and action. Alcoholics Anonymous has no "musts." Few A.A. groups impose penalties on anyone for non-conformity. We do suggest, but we don't discipline. Instead, compliance or non-

compliance with any principle of A.A. is a matter for the conscience of the individual; he is the judge of his own conduct. Those words of old time, "Judge not," we observe most literally.

"But," some will argue, "if A.A. has no authority to govern its individual members or groups, how shall it ever be sure that the common welfare does come first? How is it possible to be governed without a government? If everyone can do as he pleases, how can you have aught but anarchy?"

The answer seems to be that we A.A.s cannot really do as we please, though there is no constituted human authority to restrain us. Actually, our common welfare is protected by powerful safeguards. The moment any action seriously threatens the common welfare, group opinion mobilizes to remind us; our conscience begins to complain. If one persists, he may become so disturbed as to get drunk; alcohol gives him a beating. Group opinion shows him that he is off the beam, his own conscience tells him that he is dead wrong, and, if he goes too far, Barleycorn brings him real conviction.

So it is we learn that in matters deeply affecting the group as a whole, "our common welfare comes first." Rebellion ceases and cooperation begins because it must; we have disciplined ourselves. Eventually, of course, we cooperate because we really wish to; we see that without substantial unity there can

Continued page 3—>

Congratulations January Birthdays!

This issue we celebrate a collective **475 years** — more than 173,374 **days of sobriety** One day at a time!

164 Pages

Dan A. 15
Bruce H. 4

Happy, Joyous & Free

Bill L. 34
Darrell H. 27
Wes H. 24
Charlie T. 22
John D. 20
Larry B. 17
Bob L. 15
Richie M. 10
Charlie D. 5
Ron K. 4
Jim S. 4

Lynsey 3
Ron H. 2
Misty H. 2
Megan R. 2
Debbie S. 2

Living Sober

Judy I. 32
Ebbo K. 8
Sue P. 4

New Attitudes

Ron K. 14
Neil F. 8
Alonzo K. 7
Merri M. 2

Sober Yankees

Barbara T. 38

Jourene P. 33
One Day at a Time

Bernie 34
Madonna 34
Lew G. 21
Donna 20
Glenna 4
John 2
Dave M. 1
Jim 1

Deadline for submitting birthdays is the 20th of the preceding month through the Intergroup office.
Email: thevoice@aaocalamari.on.org or call 352.867.0660

Join the Birthday Plan

In grateful celebration of their sobriety birthdays, many A.A. members contribute \$1.00 or more for each year of sobriety to any or all of our four service entities; the local Intergroup, District, Area Assembly, and General Service Office. Every A.A. service is designed to help carry the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Your Birthday Plan contributions help make our vital services possible. Some members attribute their birthday contribution to their home group. If you make note of your home group's name along with your Birthday contribution, Intergroup District 17 will list your group in this monthly newsletter.

Mark Your Calendar

- **Corrections Committee Meets**
Jan. 5, Sunday, 6:30pm

St. Matthew's Lutheran
3453 E Silver Springs Blvd. 34470

- **Intergroup Rep Meeting**
Jan. 12, Sunday, 4:30 pm

3666A NE 25th St., Ocala 34470 All are welcome to attend. **Steering Committee Meeting follows**

- **North Florida Area Conference Assembly**

Jan. 17-19, Fri.—Sun.

Orlando Marriott Lake Mary
1501 International Parkway
Lake Mary, FL 32746
Phone: 800-380-7724

<http://www.aanorthflorida.org/events/Assembly-Flyer-Jan-2014.pdf>

- **District 17 GSR Meeting**
Jan. 30, Thursday, 6:45 pm

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

- **First Annual Florida A.A. Archives Workshop**
Feb. 15, Saturday

Redeemer Lutheran Church
3377 Aloma Ave.
Winter Park, FL 32792
Free Registration

Contact the Workshop Co-chairs:
archives@area15aa.org
archives@aanorthflorida.org

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@aaocalamari.on.org

District Corner

From the District 17 DCM

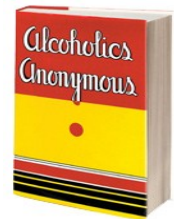
Another year comes to an end. It seems, as I look back, that time passes more quickly with each year. I hope everyone had a Joyous Holiday and/or a Merry Christmas followed by a Happy New Year.

December 7th was the Meet & Greet held at Unity Place with the Area 14 Delegate, Marilyn B. Alternate Delegate, Glenn W. Marilyn provided interesting information and facts about A.A. in Area 14. Of particular interest was the fact that only one (1) out of 100 A.A. members serves outside of the Home Group. That certainly leaves plenty of room for members to stand up and serve A.A. as a whole. Talk with anyone who has served on a committee, been a GSR or officer in District 17. We will all share what a great experience it has been. If you have never attended a District meeting could join us for a couple of meetings. We most always meet on the last Thursday of the month (November and December being the exceptions) at St. Mark's, home of the Ocala Group.

Area Assembly is coming up on January 17-19 at Lake Mary. Saturday (18th) is a day filled with workshops about all service areas. It is a great opportunity to learn about the many activities A.A. is involved in from Corrections to Bridging the Gap and many more.

Carson F.
District 17 DCM

Alcoholics Anonymous celebrates its 75th Anniversary by publishing a commemorative 1st Edition of the Big Book. Prepay for your copy at Intergroup now. A large supply has been ordered and will arrive in April.



Opportunity for Service

After 23 years of serving the AA community by chairing the 26 week Experiential Workshop, Fishin' Jim is rotating out. He is looking for a graduate of the Workshop to step forward and agree to chair, or co-chair, the Workshop for 2014. He will provide all relevant Exercises and Remarks sheets. Anyone who has been through it is qualified to pass it on. Contact Intergroup to volunteer.

Desk Worker Needed

Where:
Intergroup
When: Tues.
10am-2pm
Wed. 2pm-5pm
Requirements:
One year
sobriety



Tradition One....

be no A.A., and that without A.A. there can be little lasting recovery for anyone. We gladly set aside personal ambitions whenever these might harm A.A. We humbly confess that we are but "a small part of a great whole."

Bill W.

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Step One.... restless, irritable, and discontented until I could drink again.

My wife was trying to keep the family together, being driven crazy trying to make everybody happy except herself.

She did tell me that I was an alcoholic, but I'd have none of that talk. Sure, I drank a lot. I hung with a fast crowd. I played hard. But an alcoholic? To me, an alcoholic was a stereotype—the homeless guy in the back alley in a trench coat with a brown paper bag. I certainly wasn't an alcoholic. I thought other people drank just like I did.

Physically, I was a wreck. I was on nine different prescription medications dealing with real and not-so-real illnesses. I never, ever, felt good, and I had lost all sight of what "normal" felt like.

My life was going nowhere. I was extremely unhappy and depressed. Nothing seemed to turn out as I had planned. Why was all of this happening to me?

One day, a thought popped into my head: Maybe my family would be better off with my life insurance policy than with me in their lives. Why should all of us have to live in such misery? Maybe I'll just disappear to South America and be out of their lives once and for all.

The problem with that was, first, they shouldn't have to wait for seven years to reap the rewards of my insurance policy, and second, the alternative really, really scared me. I couldn't stop thinking about it.

Around this time, I went on a trip with some friends. It was an annual boys' trip that was nothing more than an excuse to drink heavily for five days without being scrutinized

by my family. I went out to the bars with the gang on the first night with the sole intention of really ripping it up, but, no matter how much I drank, I couldn't seem to get drunk—nor was I having any fun. Everything seemed like the same boring conversations with the same boring drinking buddies.

I left the bar well before closing time, which was truly out of character for me, and went back to the hotel to go to bed, but I couldn't sleep. Something was gnawing at me, and I lay in bed staring at the ceiling for four hours feeling very uncomfortable and restless. I thought about my family and how relieved they probably were without me around. Suddenly, I was struck with an overwhelming, almost panic-like, feeling that I had to get home.

I hit the road at 4 A.M. and drove eight hours through severe thunderstorms and tornadoes. When I got home, nothing jumped out at me as to why I needed to be there. I couldn't explain it to my wife either, and I'd scared her when I arrived home four days early from my vacation.

Three days later, this non-alcoholic picked up the phone, called a local hospital's twenty-four hour hotline, and asked for help. They scheduled me for detox and rehabilitation.

When I told my wife what I was going to do, these amazing words came out of my mouth: "I just can't do it anymore." That's how I made my start on sobriety and recovery.

I was introduced to AA in rehab when AA members came into the facility. I instantly understood the meaning of the term "wanting what they have."

As I slowly learned how to get honest with myself, I could see how my alcoholism had progressed so rapidly through my life and the lives of those around me. I came to believe that if my illness went untreated, it would prove fatal for me.

I attended a lot of First Step meetings those first few months, and more and more truths about my life became apparent to me. I'd had seizures that had gone undiagnosed (how could my doctors have helped? I lied through my teeth to them about

my drinking). I'd had an anxiety attack on a plane flight that almost caused the pilot to make an emergency landing (it was probably an attack of the DTs).

All of these recollections helped me to take that First Step.

I noticed that my sponsor, who'd been sober, more than twenty-five years, attended First Step meetings fairly regularly. I thought that might not be a bad idea, and continued to do so myself as I progressed to working the other Steps.

Through working the Steps and sharing at meetings, I learned that I was probably drinking alcoholically since I was in my late teens. What I shared in First Step meetings grew and intensified to include these realizations.

This served all the more to reinforce just how powerless I was over alcohol and how unmanageable my life really was. That First Step was just as important to me many months into recovery as it was the first day I admitted and accepted it.

That's how I made my start in AA. That's how I first started to get honest with myself. That's how I made a start in sobriety and recovery. That's how I set my sights on the First Step.

You see, Step One contains two distinct facts: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol (Fact#1). . . That our lives had become unmanageable (Fact#2). When I first got sober, the fact that I was powerless over alcohol was unquestionably related to the fact that my life had become unmanageable.

Today, I'm sober and in recovery. Both facts in the First Step are still true. I was, am, and always will be powerless over alcohol. My life was, is, and always will be unmanageable. Today, because I'm a recovering alcoholic, that's okay.

Intergroup 17 Call Center

November 2013

Meeting information 83

Office transactions 66

Twelfth Step Calls 5

Miscellaneous 89

Visitors 57

Al-Anon I

A.A. History in January

January 1

1946: The A.A. Grapevine increased the cost of a year's subscription to \$2.50.

1948: *Columbus Dispatch* reported first anniversary of Central Ohio A.A. Group. First A.A. meeting was held in Japan, English speaking.

1988: West Virginia A.A. began the first statewide toll-free telephone hotline.

January 2

1889: Bridget Della Mary Gavin (Sister Ignatia) was born in Ireland.

2003: Mid-Southern California Archives moved to new location in Riverside.

January 3

1939: First sale of Works Publishing Co. stock was recorded.

1941: Jack Alexander told Bill W. the Oxford Group would be in his Saturday Evening Post article on A.A.

January 4

1939: Dr. Bob stated in a letter to Ruth Hock that A.A. had to get away from the Oxford Group atmosphere.

1940: First A.A. group was founded in Detroit, Michigan.

1941: Bill and Lois W. drove to Bedford Hills, NY, to see Stepping Stones and broke in through an unlocked window.

January 5

1941: Bill and Lois visited Bedford Hills again.

Bill W. told Jack Alexander that Jack was "the toast of A.A. -- in Coca Cola, of course."

January 6

2000: Stephen P., compiler of the Concorde to Alcoholics Anonymous, died.

January 8

1938: New York A.A. split from the Oxford Group.

January 12

1943: Press reported the first A.A. group in Pontiac, Michigan.

January 13

1988: Jack Norris, M.D., Chairman/ Trustees of A.A. for 27 yrs. died.

2003: Dr. Earle M., author of *Physician Heal Thyself*, sober 9 years, died.

January 15

1941: A.A. Bulletin No. 2 reported St. Louis group had ten members.

1941: Bill W. asked Ruth Hock to get him "spook book," *The Unobstructed Universe*.

1945: First A.A. meeting held in Springfield, Missouri.

1948: Polk Health Center Alcoholic Clinic for Negroes started operations with 14 willing subjects. The Washington Black Group of A.A. cooperated with the clinic.

January 17

1919: 18th amendment, "Prohibition," became law.

January 19

1940: First A.A. group met in Detroit, Mich.

1943: Canadian newspaper reported eight men met at "Little Denmark," a Toronto restaurant, to discuss starting Canada's first A.A. group.

1999: Frank M., A.A. Archivist since 1983, died.

January 20

1954: Hank P., author of *The Unbeliever* in the first edition of the Big Book, died in Pennington, NJ.

January 21

1951: A.A. Grapevine published memorial issue on Dr. Bob.

January 23

1961: Bill W. sent an appreciation letter, which he considered long-overdue, to Dr. Carl Jung for his contribution to A.A.

January 24

1918: Bill W. and Lois Burnham were married, days before he was sent to Europe in WW I, weeks after sending a postcard to Senator Harold Hughes of Iowa, saying he wanted to live long enough to see Hughes become President.

January 25

1915: Dr. Bob S. married Anne Ripley.

January 26

1971: *New York Times* published Bill's obituary on page 1.

January 27

1971: The Washington Post published an obituary of Bill W. written by Donald Graham, son of the owner of the Washington Post.

January 30

1961: Dr. Carl Jung answers Bill's letter with "Spiritus Contra Spiritum."

Other significant things that happened in January (no specific date available):

1938: Jim B., author of *The Vicious Cycle*, a former atheist, gave A.A. "God as we understand Him."

1940: First AA meeting not in a home meets at Kings School, Akron, Ohio.

1942: *Drunks are Square Pegs* was published.

1951: The A.A. Grapevine published a memorial issue on Dr. Bob.

1984: *Pass It On, the story of Bill W. and how the A.A. message reached the world*, was published.

Thanks to Billy C. and Nancy O. of the group "AA History Buffs" for this list, used by permission.

Group Contributions to Intergroup

November 2013

Fiscal year: 6/1/13 to 5/31/14

GROUP NAME	Nov. '13	YTD
164 Pages Group	20.00	90.76
All You Need Group		92.31
Anonymity Group		1.15
Belleview God's Way	50.00	100.00
Blichton Road Group	20.00	60.00
Breakfast Club	278.50	1141.55
Cabin in the Woods		150.63
Eureka Group		40.00
Forest Men's Group		40.00
Fort McCoy Group		75.78
Fountain of Gratitude		30.00
Free To Be		205.00
Grateful Gals		15.50
Grupo Mano Abierta		20.00
Happy Hour Group		50.00
Happy, Joyous & Free	511.04	1790.96
Headstart Group		421.64
Healing Group	30.00	130.00
Heavy Hitters (Men's)	20.00	90.00
Joy of Living	Folded	120.00
Living Sober Group		235.00
New Attitudes Group	18.77	63.24
Ocala Group		298.10
Ocala Men's Group		399.36
One Day at a Time		500.00
Primary Purpose Group	40.00	99.00
Serenity Group		46.80
Sober Yankees		75.87
Stop Whining & Sober Up		333.00
Strength In Numbers		43.27
We Give Up		14.00
We Give Thanks	25.00	25.00
Weir Crazy	180.00	301.00
Young People's Group		295.00
District 17		244.22
Birthday Club		202.00
Individuals members	25.76	149.40
Total	1219.07	7989.50

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