

The Voice

Volume 26, Number 1

January 2009



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A HAPPY
NEW YEAR

from
Intergroup 17

A quote for January

*"We neither ran
nor fought.
But accept we did.
And then we began
to be free."*

As Bill Sees It, page 109

One member's voice

The greatest gift I ever received.

A story of experience, strength, and hope

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

Christmas is over and the trash men have picked up the gift-wrappings, satin bows, and empty boxes that I ever so greedily tore through and then threw out. I thought of all the goodies I got from Santa because when he checked his list he found out that I was nice, not naughty. Then I asked myself, "What was the greatest gift I have ever received?"

That question brought me back to the last day I drank. Alcohol had given me a sleeping room with an old rickety bed, a dresser that had cigarette burns on top, and a small table that had a hotplate on it. The window shade was torn in spots and stained from tar and

nicotine. I shared a dirty bathroom down the hall with other drunks. Needless to say, the shower was seldom used.

My family didn't know where I was or if I were dead or alive. I was malnourished. I was dehydrated. I looked around at my surroundings and asked myself, "How did I get here, in a black hole filled with loneliness, despair, and me?" I now know that alcoholism got me there, and alcoholism wanted me there alone, surrounded by squalor.

But at that moment in that room, all I could think was, "I'd be better off dead. My family would be better off if I were dead." So, my thoughts turned to suicide.

Continued, page 4

A New Year's Message. It Works!

Reprinted by permission from The Grapevine, January 1949, sixty years ago.

Nothing is so brittle as a New Year's resolution, unless it be a glass crutch.

Most New Year's resolutions shatter within a few days. Then their broken pieces lie around, as sharp as needles, remindful of failure until the skin, or the conscience, has again become calloused. What, in fact, is so rare as an unbroken New Year's resolution in June?

Yet, we in particular, were among the most prolific New Year's resolution makers. We turned them out on a mass production scale. All through the year we stored up our awareness of personal deficiencies and faults, planning to correct them all in one vast wash of resolutions. Do it all at once, we said, with splendid optimism. Easy does it, in reverse.

Of course, it probably is better to have one day or a few days of high resolution than none at all, but how much more practical if

the purpose behind the New Year's resolution is built into daily life. How much easier it is to correct the deficiencies and the faults one by one as we go along day by day, than to try to level a mountain in one stroke.

The kindness and the realism of the A.A. approach to the task of self-improvement offer more hope of success than the high resolution sworn to once a year. At least they have offered more hope and yielded more success for many.

Continued page 3

Congratulations January Birthdays!



This issue we celebrate anniversaries of our local AA family members that add up to a collective 313 years. That's 114,245 days of sobriety One Day At A Time!

Barbara T	33 years	Richie M	5 years	Al C	9 years
Bud S	29 years	Candace	4 years	Pamela P	8 years
Judy L	25 years	Phil H	2 years	Beth S	5 years
Buzz G	21 years	Ron C	2 years	Ron R	2 years
Wes H	19 years	Tom F	2 years	Bob R	1 year
John D	15 years	April F	1 year	Robert D	1 year
Hank N	14 years	John H	1 year		
Juan R	13 years	Terry H	1 year		
Larry B	12 years				
Diane M	9 years				
Heidi L	8 years				
Guido	7 years				
Jerry	7 years				
Karen H	7 years				

December 2008 Birthdays

Joe S	23 years
Roger Dem	21 years
Eddie R	11 years

Please share your AA birthday with all.
Deadline for February birthdays is
January 20. E-mail to
ocalaintergroup@msn.com or telephone

January by the Books

STEP ONE

**We admitted we were powerless over alcohol ---
That our lives had become unmanageable.**

“Alcohol, now become the rapacious creditor, bleeds us of all self sufficiency and all will to resist its demands. Once this stark fact is accepted, our bankruptcy as going human concerns is complete.”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, page 21

“Only Step One, where we made the 100 percent admission we were powerless over alcohol, can be practiced with absolute perfection.”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, page 68

“Long before I was able to obtain sobriety in A.A., I knew without a doubt that alcohol was killing me, yet even with this knowledge, I was unable to stop drinking. So, when faced with Step One, I found it easy to admit that I lacked the power not to drink. But my life was unmanageable? Never! Five months after coming into A.A., I was drinking again and wondering why.

Later on, back in A.A. and smarting from my wounds, I learned that Step One is the only Step that can be taken 100%. And that the only way to take it 100% is to take 100% of the Step. That was many twenty-four hours ago and I haven't had to take Step One again.”

Daily Reflections, page 19

TRADITION ONE

**“Our common welfare should come first;
personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.”**

“The unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most cherished quality our Society has. Our lives, the lives of all to come, depend squarely upon it. We stay whole, or A.A. dies. Without unity, the heart of A.A. would cease to beat; our world arteries would no longer carry the life-giving grace of God; His gift to us would be spent aimlessly.”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, page 129



CONCEPT ONE

**“The final responsibility and the ultimate
authority for A.A. World Services should always
reside in the collective conscience of our whole
Fellowship”**

Twelve Concepts for World Service, page 6

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 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



Service opportunities.

Hotline and 12-Step Call volunteers needed!

Intergroup has a critical need for volunteers to help staff our 24-Hour Hotline after business hours from their own homes and to help respond to 12-Step calls. One year of sobriety required. Call Intergroup 17 to volunteer: 352-867-0660.

Help take meetings to Local Correctional Institutions.

Volunteers are needed to help take AA meetings to local correctional institutions on Monday and Wednesday evenings. Applications available at Intergroup 17 office. More info, please contact Paul N. at 352-622-6967; John J. at 352-598-4319.

You've got a Friend in the Hospital.

Eddie F. is organizing meetings for hospital-bound members of our fellowship and asks for your help in carrying the message. Cell phone: 352-207-5144. Office: 352-237-8800. E-mail: eddie@ferrentinoandson.com

Publicize your service opportunities here.

Send to:

ocalaintergroup@msn.com
or call 352-867-0660



IN MEMORIAM RO FAWCETT

Ro Fawcett, a long-time member of our fellowship passed away November 29, 2008 in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Many in the Ocala area remember Ro as a member of the Happy, Joyous, and Free group and the Saturday AM Women's Meeting. Her sobriety date was July 1983. She will be missed by all who knew and loved her. Ro is survived by her life companion, Gabe Pacheco, who is also a long-standing member of our fellowship.



A memorial service will be held on Saturday, January 17, 2009 at 4:00pm at St. Mark's United Methodist Church followed by refreshments in the Fellowship Hall.

A New Year's Message. It Works!

Continued from page 1

There are, to be sure, other ways, and, of course, some New Year's resolutions do endure. But the inventory that is taken more often than annually and the resolution that is formed at the beginning and the close of each 24 hours have worked convincingly for many and will continue to work for many more.

The new hope that comes from this overwhelming evidence of a new approach to an old and deadly trouble is the offer of the New Year, of each New Year. "It works!" is the electrifying promise that we can give to others.

If there has to be a resolution today, let it be that we will offer those two words fraught with the ringing message that has been proven over and over. "It works!" They offer a new year to any who are still burdened with the past. They bring a new year whenever and wherever they are accepted. Today is the day, any day and every day, to try the new way. Today, "It works!" Tomorrow, "It works!"

Through the 13 years* of A.A., people have been doubting those words at first, testing them skeptically, and finally coming to believe them. Perhaps the message they speak makes the best resolution of all.

The A.A. who knows that "it works" needs no ceremony to remind him. His day of high resolution came the moment he took the 1st Step. His New Year began then and continues as long as he follows the new way that others have blazed. His New Year's resolutions are forged and strengthened day by day. Where the glass crutch was brittle and shattered easily, he now has at hand a staff stronger than steel. He has faith built upon proof that, "It works."

*This article was originally published in 1949, sixty years ago.

District 17 Service can start here.

Don't wait to be asked. District 17 has opportunities for service in areas as diverse as corrections and treatment facilities to public information and accessibility. Come to the next District 17 meeting to learn more. Thursday, January 29, 2009, 6:00 pm, St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 1839 N.E. 8th Avenue, Ocala, FL.

GSRs. Remember to attend Area Assembly

North Florida Area Assembly is scheduled for January 9-11 in Gainesville. See accompanying box for highlights. All AA members welcome. Complete meeting information and an agenda available at: www.aanorthflorida.org.

North Florida Area Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous Area Assembly

January 9-11, 2009. Paramount Resort and Conference Center
2900 SW 13th Street, Gainesville, FL

Friday, January 9

6 to 8 pm Registration
8 to 9 pm Discussion meeting

Saturday,

7 to 8 am Poolside discussion meeting
9 am to 6 pm New GSR and DCM orientations, workshops, officer meetings, and much more.
6 to 9:30 pm Dinner and speaker meeting
10 to 11 pm Ice cream social.
Discussion meeting

Sunday, January 11

7 to 8 am Poolside discussion meeting
9 am to Noon 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.
- Grapevine store is open on Saturday in the Grapevine Room adjacent to registration desk.
- The ice cream social cost is \$5. (It has been known to ruin a diet but warm a heart.) ☺

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

The Greatest Gift

continued from page 1

How could I do it? I could borrow a gun. Jump from a tall building. Overdose. I'm sure that alcohol was pleased with these thoughts because I now know that its ultimate goal is to kill me.

Suddenly, into that black hole of hopelessness and despair, where I felt as if I stood at the gates of Hell, came the greatest gift I have ever received—the God-given instinct of survival. I thought, "I don't want to die. I want to live." That thought came from God.

I left that sleeping room, went to de-tox, then to rehab where they taught recovery from a book called Alcoholics Anonymous.

Recovery started with Step One. "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable."

I learned that every time I got in the ring with King Alcohol that I lost all self-respect and morality, and gained, as the *Big Book* says, in "pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization."

I learned that with the first drink comes the phenomenon of

craving, after that I can't stop drinking, and that there were times I had to drink just to stop "the shakes." I learned that I have the disease of alcoholism.

Alcoholism is the great convincer. In order to surrender, I had to admit complete defeat. I had to cease fighting and go over to the winning side.

The unmanageability? Besides my living conditions in a tenement of sleeping rooms for drunks and addicts, alcohol had alienated me from anything that was good and healthy. It had alienated me from God, my family, even from basic communication with human beings, for there were days when the only person I talked to was the man at the liquor store.

Before I found Alcoholics Anonymous, alcohol was the only thing that mattered to me. It was my escape from reality. The day that God brought me back from the gates of Hell marked my beginning. So, I did not balk at Step One.

Since then, more gifts have been bestowed on me: health, my family's love and encouragement, and the fellowship of AA where

people are genuinely concerned about my well-being.

I've been given the gift of learning a new way of life. And I found a God who knows me and loves me anyway. I believe that the instinct to live was a gift from God because He wants me to be of maximum service to Him and my fellows.

I am now on the winning side. I'm so grateful for the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous and hope those who read this will understand that God is doing for me what I can't do for myself. God is Good.

Joan H.
Head Start Group
Ocala, Florida
January 2009



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

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

Send group contributions to:

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

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

NFACAA
Marilyn Balliet
Inverness, FL 34452

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

Some individual members choose to 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 large and small make a difference. Send to:

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

THANKS!

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

Ocala-Marion Country Group Contributions to Intergroup 17—from June 2008

Group	Fiscal YTD	Group	Fiscal YTD	Group	Fiscal YTD
2nd Step Group	\$ 50.00	Grace Group		Primary Purpose	\$ 42.00
11th Step Group		Grateful Gals	\$ 84.00	Shores of Sobriety	\$ 70.00
17th Street Group		Happy Highlanders - Dunnellon		Sisters of Serenity - Ocklawaha	
164 Pages Group		Happy Hour Group	\$ 100.00	Start A New Life	\$ 11.55
ACOA		Happy, Joyous & Free	\$ 117.78	Steps and Promises	
ALANDON	\$ 60.00	Headstart Group	\$ 394.55	Stop Whining and Sober Up	\$ 50.00
Acceptance	\$ 0.21	It's In The Book		Strength In Numbers - Belleview	
Alive and Well		Keep It Simple	\$ 200.00	Summerfield Group	
Anonymity Group		Last Call Group		Sundae Social Group	\$ 175.00
As Bill Sees It - The Villages	\$ 306.75	Last House On The Block		TLC Group - the Centers	
Belleview Eye Opener Group	\$ 80.00	Life Is Good Sober - The Refuge		TenBroek Group	
Belleview Group	\$ 190.00	Living Sober	\$ 224.19	Unity Group	
Bonfire Group - The Refuge		Lunch Bunch	\$ 250.31	We Give Thanks	\$ 115.00
Breakfast Club	\$ 1,675.00	Mano Abierta		We Give Up	\$ 79.00
Came To Believe	\$ 10.40	Marion Oaks Group		Weir Crazy - Summerfield	\$275.00
Citra Group	\$ 25.00	McIntosh Group		Young People's Group - YPG	\$ 10.00
Come As You Are		New Attitudes	\$ 142.33		
Conscious Contact		New Life Group	\$ 20.83	BIRTHDAY CLUB	\$ 21.00
Experience, Strength & Hope		No Name Group	\$ 30.00	DOUBLE NICKELS	\$ 10.00
Forest Group	\$ 195.00	Nueva Vida		FAITHFUL FIVERS	\$ 10.00
Ft. McCoy Group	\$ 50.00	Ocala AM Men's Group	\$ 505.00	INDIVIDUALS	\$ 48.69
Fountain of Gratitude - Salt Springs	\$ 150.00	Ocala Group	\$1,665.52		
Free To Be		Ocklawaha AM Group		DISTRICT 17	\$776.00
God's Way Group	\$ 7.50	One Page At A Time			

Local Events and Meetings of Interest

Ocala/Marion County

For a complete listing of the more than 170 meetings of AA per week in Ocala/Marion county visit:
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

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, FL

Saturday

Eat 'n Speak

Ocala Group

Last Saturday of the month

Eat: 7:00pm Speaker: 8:00pm

Small fee for meal

EVERYONE INVITED!

St. Mark's United Methodist

1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

Spanish Speaking

Grupo Mano Abierta

7:00pm every Saturday

2082 Walnut Street

Dunnellon, FL

Sunday

Intergroup 17 Monthly

5:15 pm second Sunday of month

Intergroup reps. Everyone welcome.

St. Mark's United Methodist

1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

New Meetings

"No Name Yet" Group

Open meeting, 7:30pm

Every Friday

9200 Sunset Harbor Road

Summerfield, FL

Info: Mike G. 352-245-3272

Lifesaver Group

Starting January

Open meeting, 12:00 noon

Monday through Saturday

Recovery Road at CornerStone Ctr.

6789 SW Highway 200

Ocala

Ocala Group

Open meeting, 5:30pm

Monday through Saturday

St. Mark's United Methodist

1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

Happy, Joyous and Free

Open meeting, 12:00 noon

Monday through Friday

St Matthews Lutheran Church

3452 NE Silver Springs Blvd.,

Ocala

Special Invitation

Please support our meeting.

One Page at a Time Group

Big Book Study Meeting

Sundays, 4:00 pm

Unity Place

525 NE Sanchez Ave

Ocala, FL



Special Request The Belleview Group



Help us find a new home.

The Belleview Group has been meeting at St Theresa's Church in Belleview for approximately 30 years and is now in need of a new meeting place.

Anyone who knows of a place where the group can meet on Monday and Friday evenings in the Belleview area, please contact Heidi L., Belleview Group GSR at 352-288-3401.
Email: birdheidi@aol.com



Go placidly amid the noise and haste ---

and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story. ☛ Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit. ☛ If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. ☛ Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. ☛ Exercise caution in your business affairs; for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism. ☛ Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is perennial as the grass. ☛ Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. ☛ You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. ☛ Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be, and whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul. ☛ With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy. ☛



Love and Peace,
Cindy Mc

**Make it a double.
A true
Daily Double
that is.**

A&Q

**AA Jeopardy
Coming Soon**

You already have the answers.
It's getting the questions right
that really counts.

Hosted by District 17
12:00 until 3:00pm.
February 23, 2009
Druid Hills United Methodist
1712 SE Lake Weir Avenue
Ocala, Florida

Lunch will be provided

**Check out Intergroup 17 online
www.aocalamarion.org**

Regional Events and Meetings

Intensive Big Book Workgroup
7:00 pm, January 5, 2009
First Presbyterian Church
175 Lake Hollingsworth Drive
Lakeland, FL

Featuring the compelling message of international speaker, Chris R. from Ingram, Texas. All invited. Baby sitting available on site. For more information, visit: intensivebigbook-workgroup.com, call 863-698-0015, or email: scott@intensivebigbookworkgroup.com

**North Florida Area
Assembly**
January 9-11, 2009
Gainesville, FL
Paramount Hotel



More info: www.aanorthflorida.org
(See page 4 for more details.)

Central Florida Men's Workshop
January 30-February 1, 2009
Life Enrichment Center
Leesburg, Florida

Powerful speaker meetings throughout the weekend cover such topics as The 12 Steps, Spirituality, Traditions, Sobriety in the Workplace, Sex in Sobriety, and MUCH MORE! Breakout sessions on specific topics. The Bonfire Meetings. Closing ceremonies on Sunday morning. Great for the newcomer and the long-timer alike.

Begins Friday afternoon at 2:00pm with an early bird meeting at 4:00pm. Come early for golf and fishing. Fee: \$160 after January 1, 2009. Advance registration required. No walk-ins or phone registration. More information at: www.cflmw.com

**Lake Sumter Intergroup
Back to Basics Workshop**
March 28, 2009
Leesburg Community Center
109 East Dixie Avenue
Leesburg, FL

Intensive one-day workshop led by Wally P. of Tucson, Arizona. Modeled on the original Beginners Meeting format from the 1940s. All twelve steps in one day. Registration fee: \$25. Dinner and speaker: additional \$15. Each fee increases \$5 after February 28, 2009. Registration forms available at Intergroup 17, Ocala. For more information, contact Rhonda H. at 352-787-3340 or 352-504-1953.

Publicize your special events or meetings in The Voice. Send complete details including contact information to www.aocalamarion.org or call: 352-867-0660.



**InterGroup 17 Meetings
You're invited!**

Anyone interested is urged to attend and learn more about all the great opportunities for service work within our local AA community.

Next Meeting

Sunday, January 11, 5:15 pm
St Mark's United Methodist
1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

InterGroup Reps., please send your contact info to:
ocalaintergroup@msn.com or call
352-867-0660.

**InterGroup 17
Ocala-Marion County
Florida**

3666-A N.E. 25th Street, Ocala, Florida 34470
Phone: 352-867-0660 Fax: 352-867-7819
Email: ocalaintergroup@msn.com

Hours of operation

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

Website

www.aaocalamarion.org

24-Hour Hotline

352-867-0660

Free Subscription. The Voice by e-mail.

For your free monthly subscription,
send an e-mail with "Free Voice" in the subject line to:
ocalaintergroup@msn.com.

The Voice sent by e-mail is in PDF format and can be read using Adobe Reader. Free download available at www.adobe.com. Printed copies available at InterGroup office.

**INTERGROUP 17, Inc.
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Ocala, Florida 34470**

Stamp