

The Voice

Volume 27, Number 6

June 2010



In this issue

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| One Member's Voice..... | 1 |
| Fund Raiser Special Report..... | 1 |
| June Birthdays..... | 2 |
| Remembering Anne Smith..... | 2 |
| By the Books..... | 3 |
| How to support Intergroup..... | 4 |
| Group Contributions..... | 5 |
| District 17 Corner..... | 5 |
| Tradition Six..... | 7 |
| Meet the Office Manager..... | 8 |
| Archives Reflections..... | 9 |
| Meetings/Announcements..... | 10 |
| Service Opportunities..... | 12 |
| Contact Intergroup..... | 12 |

One member's voice

A work in progress

A story of experience, strength, and hope

"Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

By the time I reached Step Six, I had some understanding of why the steps were in the order they were. Up until then I pretty much followed the directions my sponsor gave.

Step Four helped me begin the process of knowing who I was. Step Five, with guidance from my sponsor, helped me identify my patterns of behavior and my defects of character.

As many of us know by heart, Step Six says, "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character." For a long time, however, what I thought Step Six said was something like: "Were entirely ready to help God with these defects and get good or maybe perfect."

There is one paragraph in the *Big Book* about Step Six. My sponsor sent me to the *Twelve & Twelve*. I read, and we talked.

She helped me understand how Steps

Four and Five had helped me identify the parts of me I needed to let go—like worry, anxiety, intolerance, lying, and fear. You get the picture. I felt like a pretty objectionable piece of work. I felt I would never be able to change all of these bad character defects.

My words to my sponsor were, "I can't do this." Her reply? "Of course you can't." Read the step again.

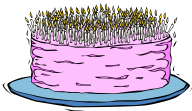
Now I was beginning to get the picture. God's got this one. Hadn't God helped with the obsession to drink? That's what the literature says. Maybe He could help with this character defect stuff. All I had to do was be willing.

In spite of and despite myself, I began to change. I asked God each day to help me recognize my defects. I got uncomfortable inside when a lie rose up in me, and still worse when it got past my lips!

My intolerant judgmental attitude was readily identifiable. My worrying led to anxiety and fear. As I recognized my fears,

Continued page 6

Happy Birthday to Us All



Alcoholics Anonymous
75th Anniversary
June 1935 to June 2010

A quote for June

Our Traditions . . . are to group survival and harmony what AA's Twelve Steps are to each member's sobriety and peace of mind.

AA Comes of Age, page 96

NOODLES, MEATBALLS, AND A QUILT

Plus a table full of sweets, a trio of inspirational stories, and loads of gratitude highlight the Intergroup 17 fund raiser.

An informal count (albeit by an alcoholic) placed the number of attendees at the May 8 Spaghetti 'n Eat at approximately 150. The evening—a fund raiser to help Intergroup 17 continue to carry the message—raised \$1,467 through the sale of raffle tickets for the Recovery Quilt (hand-made and graciously donated by Sherry R), a 50/50 raffle, and a lively bake sale masterfully conducted by Monte B.

While the numbers attest to the evening's fund-raising success, there's no way to quantify the fellowship, unity, and joy that filled the room. The evening was blessed and beautiful.

An event of this magnitude is not easy to pull off—especially when a free dinner is involved—but a large team of enthusiastic volunteers joined together, and the result was amazing.

To avoid the pitfall of failing to acknowledge the

priceless contributions of every single volunteer, we won't try to list them all.

But Diane R who headed up the event wishes to express a really big thank you to the members of the fund raising committee for their planning and organizing efforts. Hats off to everyone who donated spaghetti sauce, pasta, parmesan cheese, bread, the absolutely delicious salads and salad dressings, tableware, and

Continued on page 9

Congratulations June Birthdays!

This issue we celebrate anniversaries that add up to a collective 432 years. That's more than 157,680 days of sobriety. One day at a time!

JUNE

Alcoholics Anonymous 75 years

| | |
|-------------|----------|
| Marge H | 49 years |
| Diane R | 39 years |
| Jerry G | 29 years |
| Carole | 27 years |
| James N | 26 years |
| Debbie T | 23 years |
| Sue P | 22 years |
| Elizabeth W | 21 years |
| Gigi B | 20 years |
| John P | 20 years |
| Cindy C | 19 years |
| Patti H | 19 years |
| Mike R | 16 years |
| Don C | 7 years |
| Charlie S | 6 years |
| Michael N | 4 years |
| Steven M | 4 years |
| Craig W | 3 years |
| Phil P | 2 years |
| William L | 2 years |

| | |
|------------|--------|
| Julio | 1 year |
| Rachelle P | 1 year |
| Sammy | 1 year |

MAY

| | |
|-----------|----------|
| Dan J | 27 years |
| Marc D | 11 years |
| Charles D | 7 years |
| Jesse B | 7 years |
| James G | 5 years |
| Brian R | 3 years |
| Chris P | 3 years |
| John S | 3 years |
| Mike B | 2 years |
| Norma B | 1 year |

Please share your AA birthday with all.
 Deadline for July birthdays is June 20.
 E-mail to: thevoice@aaocalamarion.org

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, \$5, or \$10 for each year of sobriety to:

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

Anne Smith

March 21, 1881 - June 1, 1949

"She greeted strangers, and listened for their names."

Somehow we believe Dr. Bob's beloved Anne would prefer this simple tribute beyond all others. It was written by one who knew her well. It came from the bottom of a grateful heart which sensed that extravagant language and trumpeting phrases would serve only to obscure a life that had deep meaning.

It is doubtful if now, only one year after her passing, that the true significance of Anne Smith's life can be realized. Certainly it cannot yet be written, for the warmth of her love, and charm of her personality and the strength of her humility are still upon those of us who knew her. For Anne Smith was far more than a gracious lady. She was one of four people, chosen by a Higher Destiny, to perform a service to mankind. How great this contribution is, only time and an intelligence beyond man's can determine. With Dr. Bob, Lois and Bill, Anne Smith stepped into history, not as a heroine but as one willing to accept God's will and ready to do what needed to be done.

Her kitchen was the battleground and, while Anne poured the black coffee, a battle was fought there which has led to your salvation and mine. It was she, perhaps, who first understood the miracle of what passed between Bill and Dr. Bob. And, in the years to follow, it was she who knew with divine certainty that what had happened in her home would happen in other homes again, again, and yet again.

For Anne, understood the simplicity of faith. Perhaps that's why God chose her for us. Perhaps that's why Anne never once thought of herself as a 'woman of destiny' but went quietly about her job. Perhaps that's why, when she said to a grief-torn wife, "Come in, my dear, you're with friends now--friends who understand" that fear and loneliness vanished. Perhaps that's why Anne always sat in the rear of the meetings, so she could see the newcomers as they came, timid and doubtful. . .and make them welcome.

There's a plaque on the wall of Akron's St. Thomas hospital dedicated to Anne. It's a fine memorial. But there's a finer one lying alongside the typewriter as this is being written--letters to Dr. Bob from men and women who knew and loved her well. Each tries to put in words what is felt in many hearts. They fail--and that's the tribute beyond price. For real love, divine love, escapes even the poet's pen.

So, in the simplest way we know, and speaking for every AA everywhere, let's just say 'Thanks, Dr. Bob, for sharing her with us.' We know that she's in a Higher Group now, sitting well to the back, with an eye out for newcomers, greeting the strangers and listening for their names!

The AA Grapevine, June 1950
 Reprinted by permission of AA World Services

June by the Books

STEP SIX

"Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

Step Six necessary for spiritual growth.. The beginning of a lifetime job. Recognition of difference between striving for objective ---and perfection. Why we must keep trying. "Being ready " is all-important. Necessity of taking action. Delay is dangerous. Rebellion may be fatal. Point at which we abandon limited objectives and move toward God's will for us.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pages 6-7

"This is the Step that separates the men from the boys." So declares a well-loved clergyman who happens to be one of A A's greatest friends. He goes on to explain that any person capable of enough willingness and honesty to try repeatedly Step Six on all his faults---without any reservations whatever---had indeed come a long way spiritually, and is therefore entitled to be called a man who is sincerely trying to grow in he image and likeness of his Creator.

Of course, the often disputed question of whether God can---and will be answered with a prompt affirmative by almost any A.A. member. to him, this proposition will be no theory at all; it will be just about the largest fact in his life.. He will usually offer his proof in a statement like this:

"Sure I was beaten, absolutely licked. My own willpower just wouldn't work on alcohol. Change of scene the best efforts of family, friends, doctors, and clergymen got no place with my alcoholism. I simply couldn't stop drinking, and no human being could seem to do the job for me. But when I became willing to clean house and then asked a Higher Power, God as I understand Him, to give me release, my obsession to drink vanished.. It was lifted right out of me."

Twelve Step and Twelve Traditions, page 63

TRADITION SIX

An AA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

The moment we saw that we had an answer for alcoholism, it was reasonable (or so it seemed at the time) for us to feel that we might have the answer to a lot of other things. The A.A. groups, many thought, could go into business, might finance any enterprise whatever in the total field of alcoholism. In fact, we felt duty-bound to throw the whole weight of the A.A. name behind any meritorious cause.

Here are some of the things we dreamed. Hospitals didn't like alcoholics, so we thought we'd build a hospital chain of our own. People needed to be told what alcoholism was, so we'd educate the public, even rewrite school and medical textbooks . . .

We seriously thought of rewriting the laws of the land, and having it declared that alcoholics are sick people. No more would they be jailed; judges would parole them in our custody.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, page 155

Tradition Six Checklist

1. Should my fellow group members and I go out and raise money to endow several AA beds in our local hospital?
2. Is it good for a group to lease a small building?
3. Are all the officers and members of our local club for AA's familiar with "Guidelines on Clubs" (which is available free from GSO) ?
4. Should the secretary of our group serve on the mayor's advisory committee on alcoholism?
5. Some alcoholics will stay around AA only if we have a TV and a card room.. If this is what is required to carry the message to them, should we have these facilities?

Traditions Checklist, page 6

CONCEPT SIX

On behalf of A.A. as a whole, our General Service Conference has the principal responsibility for the maintenance of our world services, and it traditionally has the final decision respecting large matters of general policy and finance. But the Conference also recognizes that the chief initiative and the active responsibility in most of these matters should be exercised primarily by the Trustee members of the conference when they at among themselves as the General Service Board of Alcoholic Anonymous.

The A.A. Service Manual, page 26

This concept may appear to be contradictory; it may look like the collision of an irresistible force with an immovable object. On the other hand we see a Board of Trustees which is invested with complete legal power over A.A.'s funds and services, while on the other hand we find that A. A.'s General Service Conference is clothed with such great traditional influence and financial power that, if necessary, it could overcome the legal rights of the Board of Trustees. It can therefore give the Trustees directives and secure compliance with them---practically speaking.

The A.A. Service Manual, page 29

If therefore in the years ahead, the Conference will always bear in mind the actual rights, duties, responsibilities and legal status of the General Service Board, and if the Trustees in their deliberation will constantly realize that the Conference is the real seat of ultimate service authority, we may be sure that neither will be seriously tempted to make a "rubber stamp" out of the other. We may expect that in this way grave issues will always be resolved and harmonious cooperation will be the general rule.

The A.A. Service Manual, page 32

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

AA Responsibility Statement

Intergroup is self-supporting through the contributions of the groups and individuals we serve. We accept no outside contributions and generate a minimal additional income from the sale of literature. Intergroup is absolutely reliant upon group contributions to continue to provide our services.

Today, Intergroup 17 faces critical financial challenges. The average monthly operating expenses run between \$2500 and \$2800. Unfortunately, group contributions have dropped sharply in the past year putting Intergroup 17 in serious financial difficulty. Only about 20 percent of area

groups make financial contributions, regularly. Support is much needed and gratefully acknowledged. If your group does not contribute regularly, please consider doing so. If you as an individual can make a direct personal contribution, your gift will be gratefully welcomed.

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

Group contributions

Intergroup 17
3666A NE 25th Street
Ocala, FL 34470

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

NFACAA
P.O. Box 567
Melbourne, FL 32902

District 17
P.O. Box 3081
Ocala, FL 3447

Individual contributions

Individual members can 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"
- Once-a-year contribution

Please note: According to the AA publication, "Self Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix," individual contributions are accepted from AA members only and are limited to \$3000 per year per person. (http://aa.org/pdf/products/f-3_selfsupport.pdf)

Make your contribution today.

"When we meet and defeat the temptation to take large gifts we are only being prudent. But when we are generous with the hat, we give a token that we are grateful for our blessing and evidence that we are eager to share what we have found with all those who still suffer."

Bill W, Language of the Heart

There are many ways to contribute to Intergroup 17 as an individual. Please indicate your preferred method below, complete the form, enclose your contribution made payable to Intergroup 17 Inc., and mail to Intergroup 17, P.O Box 1192, Ocala, Fl. 344708

Faithful Fiver. \$5 contribution each month

Double Nickel. \$10 each month.

Birthday Club: \$ _____

One-a-year contribution: \$ _____

Providing any or all of the following information is optional:

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Contributions may be tax deductible. Please consult your tax preparer for more information and guidance.

Group Contributions to Intergroup 17 APRIL 2010

**Figures below reflect total contributions for fiscal year 2009-10.
Report below is from June 1, 2009 through April 30, 2010 only.
If there is an error, please contact Intergroup 17.**

| GROUP NAME | \$ Apr '10 Contri- butions | Contri- butions 6/1/09- 4/30/10 | GROUP NAME | \$ Apr '10 Contri- butions | Contri- butions 6/1/09- 4/30/10 |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 164 Pages Group | | 136.09 | Living Sober Group | 64.21 | 611.43 |
| 17th Street Group | | | Lunch Bunch Group | | 249.96 |
| Acceptance | 50.00 | 300.00 | Marion Oaks | 0.23 | 0.23 |
| Alive and Well | 30.00 | 110.00 | McIntosh Group | | |
| All You Need Group | 30.00 | 64.17 | Men's Group Ocala | | 502.00 |
| As Bill Sees It | 206.75 | 598.40 | New Attitudes Group | | 92.09 |
| Belleview Eye Opener | | | New Beginnings Group | | |
| Belleview God's Way | | 15.77 | New Life Group | | |
| Belleview Group | | 288.99 | No Name Group | | 124.50 |
| Bonfire Group | | | Ocala Group | 282.61 | 2,276.25 |
| Breakfast Club | 300.00 | 2,790.79 | Ocklawaha AM Group | | |
| Came To Believe | | 20.00 | One Page At A Time | | |
| Charity Group | | | Primary Purpose Group | 29.00 | 98.00 |
| Citra Group | | 56.69 | Resentment Too Group | | |
| Come As You Are | | 25.00 | Second Step Group | | |
| Conscious Contact | | 84.41 | Shores of Sobriety | 25.00 | 135.00 |
| Day by Day | | | Sisters of Serenity | | |
| Dunnellon Group | | | Start A New Life | | 400.00 |
| Dunnellon Rainbow | | | Steps and Promises | | |
| Eleventh Step Group | | | Stop Whining & Sober Up | | 150.00 |
| Experience, Strength & Hope | | | Strength In Numbers | | 0.70 |
| First Impressions | | | Summerfield Group | | 32.00 |
| Forest Group | 40.00 | 290.46 | Summerfield New Green | | |
| Fountain of Gratitude | 40.00 | 184.00 | Sm'field Living in Today | | |
| Free To Be | | 130.00 | Sundae Social Group | | |
| Ft. McCoy Group | | 40.00 | TLC Group, The Centers | | 8.72 |
| God's Way Group | 6.00 | 6.00 | Thursday Night Step Gp. | | |
| Grace Group | | | We Give Thanks | | 110.00 |
| Grateful Gals | 60.00 | 60.00 | We Give Up | 0.41 | 143.16 |
| Green Group | | | Weir Crazy | | 440.00 |
| Grupo Mano Abierta | | 75.00 | Williston Winners | | |
| Grupo Nueva Vida | | | Won Rebos Group | | |
| Happy Hour Group | | 120.00 | Young People's Group | 100.00 | 100.00 |
| Happy, Joyous & Free | | 2,469.78 | District 17 | 50.00 | 605.00 |
| Headstart Group | 52.51 | 417.11 | Birthday Club (personal) | 50.00 | 240.00 |
| It's In The Book | | | Double Nickel (personal) | | 10.00 |
| Keep It Simple | | 465.75 | Faithful 5-ers (personal) | 20.00 | 110.00 |
| Last Call Group | 100.00 | 225.00 | Individuals (other) | 7.28 | 464.18 |
| Last House on the Block | | | | | |
| Life is Good Sober Group | | | Total | \$1,543.77 | \$15,970.78 |
| Life Saver Group | | 100.15 | | | |

Intergroup 17 Call Center February 2009

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Meeting info requests | 70 |
| Twelfth Step Calls | 14 |
| Office transactions | 33 |
| Visitors | 49 |
| Al-Anon | 14 |
| Miscellaneous | 47 |

*Calls requesting information on or needing assistance from Al-Anon are respectfully referred to the appropriate local resources.

Intergroup 17 Financial Statements

Monthly financial statements for Intergroup 17 are available for review at the Intergroup 17 office during regular office hours.

First Contact



“Is this AA? Well, um . . . I might have a drinking problem. Can you help me?”

**Can YOU?
Yes YOU can!
Will YOU?**

**Just say “Yes” to
answering 12th Step calls,
we’ll show you the rest.**

Call Intergroup to learn more.
352 867-0660

Intergroup 17 Monthly Meetings Everyone invited!

Open to all. Learn more about AA, Intergroup 17, and the great opportunities for service work .

**Sunday, June 13, 5:15 pm
St. Mark's United Methodist
1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala**

District 17 Corner

Highlights of the minutes of the April 29, 2010, meeting of District 17 at St. Mark's UMC, Ocala.

DCM Nancy D presided. 16 officers, committee chairs, and GSRs in attendance.

Treasurer's Report Presented and accepted.

Archives: Kathy P gave supplies of new bookmarks to GSRs to encourage AA book donations to Archives.

CPC/PI: Michelle Y reported on four upcoming conferences.

Corrections: Sherry R reported on workbooks, clearances for volunteers, and new halfway house for women.

Grapevine: Rob G to determine interest among Spanish-speaking groups for a La Vina workshop.

Intergroup: John P and Priscilla P reported on recent queries about Intergroup finances.

Treatment: Dean P resigned as chairperson. New chairperson sought. Requires two years of continuous sobriety.

Activities subcommittee: Possible upcoming activities include ice cream social and service fair.

Gratitude Dinner: Committee seeking new location. Volunteers needed for planning and more.

Want to get involved?

Attend the next District 17 meeting.

Thursday, June 24, 6 pm
St. Mark's UMC, Ocala
All Welcome

A work in progress

Continued from page 1

the more fear flooded to the surface. I didn't feel like I had a way out of the fear.

Thank God for sponsors. She again came to my rescue and began walking with me through the fear. She helped me identify where the fear came from, and how it was affecting my life. Then we talked about how faith—my faith—would ease the fears. I began to understand and know how faith works.

The list of character defects seemed to go on forever. My sponsor helped me with my self-condemnation. By this time, I felt I didn't deserve anything good in my life. Be assured she set me straight on that topic. She helped me understand that I was just another person with defects and assets like everyone else in the meetings I attended. I really began to feel like "one of us." Finally I belonged somewhere and fit in just right.

Once I began to recognize my defects I could begin to let God do God's part. It wasn't always easy because I wanted to jump in and help. I learned what it meant to "let go and let God." That happened when I was willing.

Little by slow, it wasn't so important that I lie so you would think better of me; honesty worked just fine. My intolerance of others began to subside, and I was able to begin to let people get closer to me. I worried a lot less. I had to let go of my false pride and ask for help.

So began my journey with Step Six. My sponsor saw changes in me long

before I did. She encouraged me when I felt overwhelmed and even had me identify some of my assets.

My relationship with God was growing. I wasn't terrified that I was going to be struck with a bolt of lightning from the heavens. Maybe, just maybe, God loved me as one of His kids. What a wonderful feeling.

Am I completely free of my character defects? Step Six is an ongoing process for me. The grosser defects were easier to let go. Self-pity, self-seeking, impatience, and many others can creep into my daily life.

For me, my defects come with an uncomfortable feeling on the inside—a feeling that happens more quickly these days. Step Six aims me towards perfection. The truth is I will never be perfect. I like it that way. I am a work in progress. That allows me to trip and fall, get up, try again, and talk to my sponsor.

More often than not, what I think my problem is and the real problem are quite different. That keeps me searching and asking for God's guidance and direction. The experience, strength, and hope from group members teach and guide me. I am always listening to other share how they live Step Six. For me, that is God at work. I remain teachable and willing.

Carson F
 Ocala, Florida
 June 2010

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

Tradition Six

Continued from facing page

or in print: Many of the great improvements in the treatment of alcoholics during the last thirty-five years have been brought about quietly, behind the scenes, by anonymous AA members, acting as private citizens interested in a public-health problem. The Sixth Tradition leaves every AA member the freedom to do that, if he cares to, so long as his actions do not constitute AA endorsement (or criticism) of any enterprises, nor "lend the AA name" to them. (There's another side to this coin,

too. Once upon a time, a non-AA alcoholism program tried to create the impression, falsely, that it was endorsed by AA. But the attempt backfired. The professionals at whom the program was aimed thought it was just an extension of AA and would not come near it! I know. I was the guilty one.)

Adherence to our primary purpose makes AA unique--and also gives us a special responsibility, it seems to me. We are the only people who have our own personal experience to share. And we are the only people who try to do nothing except help the individual alcoholic because we have to, to stay sober

ourselves. We help him, not for the sake of society or of science, but for the sake of our own sobriety.

As a result, other programs in the alcoholism field have come to depend heavily on AA's continuing integrity. At every single professional meeting, it is a conspicuous fact that non-alcoholics count absolutely on the aid of sober, conscientious AAs who remember *When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.*

Reprinted from *The AA Grapevine*, August 1970 by permission of AA World Services

More about Tradition Six from the AA Grapevine

An AA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

Before I understood even dimly what AA was, I was sure I could improve it. Looking back, I realize now that my pure gall was appalling, since it was rooted so firmly in ignorance. I knew almost nothing about the externals of the Fellowship and much less about its spiritual principles. Since I was too proud to admit that there was anything I did not know, I almost never asked questions.

Practically nothing in the very skimpy AA literature we had then (in 1945) explained how AA or its component units functioned, so my knowledge was based on what I heard and saw in one group. Then as now, we AA members (like other human beings everywhere, I suppose) talked a bewildering mélange of facts, guesswork, inspired wisdom, gossip, and nonsense. Yet I assumed that what I heard was the whole AA truth, and, armed only with my small collection of quick impressions and misinformation about AA, I wanted to change it.

Surely, for example, AA should be informing the medical profession about the facts of our disease as *we* understood them. (The Yale--now Rutgers--School of Alcohol Studies and the National Council on Alcoholism had barely got started, and this was nine years before the American Medical Association established its alcoholism committee.)

The government, I was sure, should change laws relating to alcoholics. (The North American Association of Alcoholism Programs and the National Center for Control and Prevention of Alcoholism were then impossible dreams.)

Detoxification centers, vocational rehabilitation, and other services, improved understanding by social workers, school kids, psychologists, and cops--all these and more were badly needed. Why, I carped, was AA not getting busy?

Just suppose for a minute that our Fellowship had indeed been misguided right smack into all those activities. What a tangled web we could have woven! How many drunks would have

been ignored, left to die, as we mounted our political and fund-raising campaigns! How many enemies AA would have made for itself if it had tried to dictate to the medical, clerical, and legal professions!

If my AA group had had prestige, money, and power at stake, I fear my own sobriety would have found little support at our meetings. There would have been no room for it on the agenda. Many of us would have left, I fear--*sic transit* glorious sobriety, and maybe AA itself.

I am certain now that if any AA-run governmental programs on alcoholism had been set up and had gone bust, my resentments would have burst through my tender, new sobriety. Suppose we had started an official AA club and it had been raided because of gambling, or AA-run retreats for alcoholics had become subjects of gossip. What then? I would have gotten either emotionally embattled or, more probably, alcoholically embottled.

As always, AA as a whole proved much wiser than I as an individual, and my group just plugged along, trying to do its own thing. Even without such complications, we had trouble enough just trying to figure out *what* our own thing really was. The Traditions had not been written yet.

At first, we felt we had to do at least three things: (1) provide a place where members could play cards, eat, and have coffee any time; (2) maintain an office with telephones as a central clearinghouse for Twelfth Step work and information about meetings; (3) keep our own AA meetings and Twelfth Step work going.

The first two involved us in legal corporations, finances, real-estate management, building maintenance, cafeteria operation, a paid secretary, and, naturally, rules and officers. As a result, newcomers who just needed the message often got shortchanged because we were too busy with serious problems like a drunken chef, typewriter repairs, club dues, revising by-laws, a temperamental janitor, and de-

cidating who could and could not use the phone or which brand of coffee to buy.

We made it almost impossible for newcomers to tell the difference between joining a club and simply becoming a sober AA. I know. I was one of those newcomers.

People who did not get elected to boards or did get demoted from jobs proceeded to get drunk. Criticism of the cafeteria cashier's report became resentments of "AA's financial structure," yet! Two fellows I liked were displeased by the cafeteria food, blamed AA, and left. (No wonder! They had heard little else except the food discussed at their first three meetings. They were dead within a year, of alcoholism.)

The solution my group finally found, nearly a quarter-century ago, was quite simple. We decided that, no matter how exciting and how needed such business enterprises were, an AA group ought to stay out of them, because discussions of money, property, and prestige kept us wildly distracted from the Twelve Steps.

As an AA group, we decided to carry the message, period. So we dropped the food business and real-estate management. Some individuals formed separate nonprofit corporations, outside AA, to run clubs or day centers for AAs who wanted such amenities. As for the local central office (or intergroup), it was eventually operated and supported by *all* the groups nearby.

This arrangement has worked beautifully ever since, both in New York and elsewhere. And now, of course, other services seriously needed by alcoholics are at last beginning to get under way--but *not* under the auspices of AA. Food, clothing, shelter, and medical assistance are often necessary for the alcoholic's recovery. But other organizations, efficiently operated and professionally experienced in these matters, can handle them better than an AA group.

Nevertheless, let's not overlook a fact seldom recognized, in conversation

Continued on facing page

Meet Your Intergroup 17 Office Manager

Although Intergroup 17's new Office Manager came on board a few months ago, *The Voice* has never officially introduced Priscilla P to our readers.

A member of the fellowship for more than 23 years, Priscilla brings to the job management credentials that include extensive experience in business and an MBA in accounting.

Priscilla usually works afternoons at the Intergroup office, but also fills in when scheduled office volunteers become unavailable.

About the Office Manager Position

For those who may not be familiar with the responsibilities of this vital position, the office manager is a part-time paid position that requires a minimum of 15 hours per week, but often extends to many more.

The Intergroup 17 By-laws include the following description of the Officer Manager's qualifications, hiring procedure, and duties:

The Intergroup 17 Office Manager shall be compensated with salary or fee agreed upon by the Steering Committee. Paid Vacations shall be for a duration of one (1) week for one year's service, two (2) weeks for two year's service, and three (3) weeks for three or more year's service.

The Office Manager shall not be a member of either the Steering Committee or an Intergroup 17 Representative, but should attend and have a voice (but not a vote) in both the Steering Committee and Representatives' meetings. The Office Manager should resign any group or other AA offices. Nor should the Office Manager be an officer in any outside club, or other agency active in the field of alcoholism.

The Office Manager may be terminated at the will of the Steering Committee.

The complete language of the by-laws referring to the office manager position are reprinted on this page.

Duties of the Office Manager

INTERGROUP 17 BYLAWS ARTICLE VII

The duties of the Intergroup 17 Office Manager include, but are not limited to:

1. Responsible for staffing office during regular office hours established by the Steering Committee. It is recommended that only volunteers with at least one (1) year of continuous and immediate sobriety, and meeting other requirements established by the Office Manager staff the Intergroup 17 office.
2. Responsible to train volunteers using written instructions for working the desk.
3. If no volunteers are available, Office Manager must be present during regular office hours.
4. Keep a daily log of all telephone calls and office visits classifying them as to their nature.
5. Relay requests for AA speakers from outside organizations to appropriate committee member.
6. Keep accurate and up-to-date records on member groups of Intergroup 17, including the following information: Name of group; Meeting times and type; Contact address; Record of group donations; Telephone contact; Name, address, phone of Group Rep and Alternate
7. Issue information on group activities, special events, etc.
8. Dispense general information to persons interested in alcoholism, always being guided by our Twelve Traditions.
9. Assist Chairs of all service committees.
10. Handle all correspondence and maintain filing system.
11. Handle distribution of meeting lists and The VOICE copies to member groups and individual subscribers.
12. Keep accurate and up-to-date 12th Step Call List (made up of Intergroup 17 group members, and including volunteers available for calls at home from answering service after hours, on weekends, and holidays).
13. Provide answering and referral service for Alanon and Alateen.

Distribute Alanon and Alateen literature when requested.

14. Establish, maintain and manage an inventory of literature and other items for sale as approved by Steering Committee. Manage the selling of merchandise. Maintain, with Treasurer, appropriate records of this activity.
15. Prepare checks and pay those bills and invoices resulting from the conduct of the routine business matters of Intergroup 17. All other bills will be paid in coordination with Treasurer according to Steering Committee directives.
16. Such other duties as the Steering Committee may assign.

Want to know more? Willing to give your time to service?

If you're interested in knowing more about how Intergroup 17 is managed, the services it provides, its financial condition and management, or any other aspect of its operations, please attend the next monthly meeting open to all members of the fellowship, Sunday, June 13, 5:15 pm, St. Marks UMC.

Intergroup 17 is always seeking volunteers for staffing the office and filling other service roles. If interested, you'll find many opportunities by calling the office or attending the monthly meeting.

As Bill Said It. With a sense of humor—and humility

Members of our fellowship are prone to spend hours of meeting time debating the precise meaning of words in the Steps and Traditions.

When co-founder Bill W. was asked why he said "defects of character" in Step Six and then used "shortcomings" in Step Seven, he replied: "I just didn't want to use the same word twice."

*From The AA Grapevine, July 1977, Vol. 34, No 2.
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Highlights of the Intergroup 17 Fund Raiser

Continued from page 1

the beverages. To the individuals who set up the room, set the tables, and cleaned up after, your hard work is truly appreciated. And of course, everyone's compliments to the "chefs" and kitchen team who worked through heat and steam to prepare the incredible meal (wow great job everyone). Thanks also to everyone who sold raffle tickets for the quilt, and the 50-50, to everyone who donated the wonderful desserts for our auction, and to our three speakers.

We are especially grateful for the generosity of the Church of Christ, which through the efforts of one of our fellowship stepped up at the last minute to provide a venue for this great gathering of sobriety and the recovery community. How wonderful it was to see everyone join together to help.

Again, thank you. Love and light from the fund raising committee.

Insights and inspiration from three whose lives have been touched by Intergroup 17

Reported by Matt B

As a member of the local fellowship, I attended the May 8 Spaghetti Dinner and fund raiser for Intergroup 17. The evening included three speakers, each with a special connection to Intergroup.

Sherry R's first contact with AA was a call to Intergroup. Not only has she remained sober in the intervening 21 years, she also has held many service jobs. James N has served in numerous volunteer capacities at Intergroup and now takes regular shifts staffing the front desk. As one of the dedicated volunteers who takes afterhours hotline calls, Bill J has been the first responder and the hand of AA to many sick and suffering reaching out for help.

After listening to these three tell their stories of service, I was reminded of a passage from page 52 of *The Big Book*: "When we saw others solve their problems by simple reliance upon the spirit of the Universe, we had to stop doubting the power of God. Our ideas didn't work. But the God idea did."

Each of the speakers expressed it a little differently, but the point was well taken. When we as alcoholics put God first, amazing things happen.

The first speaker, Sherry R., said that the first time she called AA she thought she was calling AAA—the American Automobile Association—but once she talked to Ruth at Intergroup, she found a sense of comfort that only another Alcoholic understands. She spoke of the overwhelming peace and the hope that she was given.

Sherry also told how at that time there wasn't a District 17 and how important Intergroup was to her and countless others who called needing help. She stressed how important it is to be connected to your home group to feel a sense of self worth and noted with obvious emotion that AA and her Higher Power had given her a life beyond her dreams.

James N., the next speaker, began by saying that Alcoholism beat him into a state of submission. At the time he was in West Palm Beach and found an ad for Alcoholics Anonymous in the newspaper placed between ads for two escort services. James said that the Intergroup office there had directed him to a step meeting and that he began to learn about love and tolerance from the people he met there. As a faithful volunteer at Intergroup 17 in Ocala, he also noted that when doing service work the amount of time you have sober is not necessarily crucial. Time is only crucial, he said, if you're on the back of a race-horse or in jail.

The final speaker, Bill J., recalled that his sponsor told him that his sobriety was contingent on his relationship with God and working with others, and that as alcoholics ourselves that we have a unique gift to help other alcoholics if our actions match up with our words. He said that answering the after-hours hotline phones for Intergroup 17 is one way that he shows gratitude, and ended by saying, "I give God my life and remain available for other Alcoholics."

Does that kind of service make a difference? It did to me. I was one of those guys who called when Bill J. was answering the phones for Intergroup 17. He asked me to meet him and took me to a meeting at Happy Joyous and Free. I've been around ever since.

Plans are already underway for more activities during the summer months. If you'd like to get involved in planning or as a volunteer, contact Intergroup 17 at 352-867-0660

Archives Reflections

Presenting the Booze Brothers.

And a lesson in how to get some respect.

Chuck H, a "certifiable" old-timer and the lucky member who won the Recovery Quilt at the recent Intergroup 17 fund raiser, contributed this "vivid" memory to the archives collection.

Chuck recalls that Intergroup used to have a very active Activities Committee, of which he was apparently a very active member.

He said he recently discovered among his AA memorabilia one of a set of old jackets that he, John L, and Mark I has purchased at Goodwill.

The trio spray painted the jackets purple, glued sequins on the collars, and then appeared at an Intergroup dance as the Booze Brothers, performing the hit, *Get a Job*.

Not to be outdone, a women's trio composed of Judy L, Charlene, and Sue T got up on "stage" performed their version of Aretha Franklin's *R-E-S-P-E-C-T*. The dance was a huge success and the local talent was enjoyed by all.



Each month, as Archives chairperson for District 17, Kathy P, shares a reflection from the written and oral history of Ocala-Marion County. The District Archives are housed at Intergroup 17 offices. If you have a story, memory, documents, photos, or other memorabilia that relate to our local history, please let Kathy know. Leave a message at Intergroup with phone number or email address, and Kathy will contact you. Call 352 867 0660.

Upcoming Events and Meetings of Interest

Ocala/Marion County

There are more than 160 AA meetings per week in Ocala/Marion county visit. Check out the When & Where online: www.aocalamarion.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

Saturday

Eat 'n Speak

Ocala Group

Last Saturday of the month

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

Small fee for meal. All welcome.

St. Mark's United Methodist

1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

Spanish Speaking

Grupo Mano Abierta

7:00pm every Saturday

2082 Walnut Street, Dunnellon

Sunday

Intergroup 17 Monthly

5:15 pm second Sunday of month

Intergroup Reps. All welcome.

St. Mark's United Methodist

1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

Newer Meetings

NEW LOCATION

Heavy Hitters of Ocala (men's group)

Closed Big Book Discussion

Saturdays, 5:00-6:30 pm

Unity Place

525 NE Sanchez, Bldg 300, Ocala

The Come As You Are Women's Group

Big Book, first Tuesday of month

Speaker, last Tuesday of month

1138 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

Thursday Night Step Group

Closed Step Meeting

Thursdays, 8 pm

South Ocala Baptist Church

2907 SE 52nd St, Ocala, FL

Carry the Message Group Needs your support!

Open Discussion, 7PM Monday

Zion United Methodist Church

1605 Blichton Road

(Corner ML King Blvd & Blichton)

Last Call Group

New meetings. New times.

New! Tuesday 10 pm

OD Candle Light

New! Thursday 10 pm

Step & Traditions Candle Light

Continuing: Friday and Saturday, 11 pm; Sunday, 10 pm.

All meetings at CATS

730 SE Osceola Avenue, Ocala

Carry This Message Group

Big Book Study Meeting

Mondays, 6:00 to 7:30 pm

Lion's Club

5850 Lillian Circle

Belleview, Florida

(across from Lake Lillian)

Sober Yankees Group. New group.

Tuesdays, 7 pm

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

5200 SW SR 200, Ocala, 34474

No smoking on premises

Parking in back.

Ocala Group.

New added meeting.

Saturdays, 1 pm

St. Mark's United Methodist

1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

Special Notice

The Anthony Group is no longer serving as an AA group. Those seeking meetings are invited to visit the Intergroup website for a complete list of local groups: www.aocalamarion.org

Speaker Meeting Living Sober Group

Sunday, June 13

7:30 pm

This month's speaker
Bill R from Cleveland, Ohio

Congregational Church

7171 SW State Rd 200

Ocala, Florida

All Welcome

Special Events, Celebrations, Notices

Free Subscription. The Voice by e-mail. Sent anonymously.

For your free monthly subscription, send an e-mail with "Free Voice" in the subject line to:
thevoice@aaocalamarion.org

The Voice by e-mail can be read using Adobe Reader. Free download at www.adobe.com. Printed copies available at Intergroup office. Also view current and past issues online at www.aaocalamarion.org

Looking for a local meeting?

Choose from more than 160 meetings a week.

When and Where online!
www.aaocalamarion.org

Print copies available through home groups or for purchase at Intergroup 17 office for ten cents each.

Mark Your Calendar

See details elsewhere in this issue or link to more information.

6/11-13, 2010 AA Founders Day, Akron, Ohio. www.akron.aa/foundersday

6/13, 2010 Living Sober Speaker Meeting. Speaker Bill R from Cleveland, OH

7/1-4, 2010 International Convention, A Vision for You. San Antonio, TX. www.aa.org

7/23-25, 2010 North Florida Area Assembly. www.aanorthflorida.org

8/11-15, 2010 54th Florida State Convention, Miami.

www.54.flstateconvention.com

9/24-26, 2010 Escape Disaster Together!, Florida Conference of Young People in AA, Lake Buena Vista, Florida. www.fcypaa2010.org

Founders' Day 75th Anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous June 11- 13, 2010 Akron, Ohio

2010 marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous in Akron, Ohio. A weekend of special events are planned:

- AA Meetings and Alkathons throughout the event
- Bus tours of historic sites including Dr. Bob's home, St. Thomas Hospital, "the" Mayflower Hotel, the house where Bill and Bob first met, and more
- Graveside service at Dr. Bob's burial site
- Special presentations
- Traditions meetings
- Alanon and Alateen meetings
- Plays and skits
- Music and dance
- Much, much more

Onsite Registration Still Available

Pre-registration is closed, but onsite registration begins June 11. All are invited.

- Basic Registration \$17
- Accommodations and meal plans also available

Find complete details including all events, dates, locations, and times at www.akronaa.org/foundersday

June at the Lost and Found Club

339 NE Sanchez Avenue
(NE 4th St. & Tuscaquilla Park)
352-351-4688

Check the club for scheduled activities.

The Lost and Found Club is not affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous World Services or Intergroup 17. Local AA groups and others rent space from the club for meetings and events. Inquire at the club

54th Annual Florida State Convention

August 11-15, 2010
Doral Golf Resort & Spa
Miami, Florida



Step into the Sunshine

Inspiring Speakers

Sandy B. Tampa, FL
Bob D. Las Vegas, NV
Wayne B. Santa Monica, CA
Ralph W. Los Angeles, CA
Theresa F. Hollywood, CA
Steve A. Sherman Oaks, CA
Bob Z. Newbury Park, CA
Betty Ann Z. Newbury Park, CA

A Program Full of Fellowship and Fun

Meetings, Meetings, Meetings...

Workshops
Spanish Speaking
Marathon
Meditation
Old Timers
Young People
G.L.B.T

Al-Anon & Alateen

Friday Banquet & Ice Cream Social
Saturday Banquet & Ice Cream Social
Dances and Entertainment
Golf Tournament
Horseshoe Tournament
Run / Walk

Full information and registration at
www.54.flstateconvention.com
Or call: 305 606-6300

DISCLAIMER. *The Voice* newsletter is published by Intergroup 17 Ocala-Marion County, Florida, and is created by alcoholics for alcoholics. Articles in the newsletter written by individual members of Alcoholics Anonymous are expressions of their own experiences and opinions and not necessarily those of Intergroup 17 or AA as a whole. *The Voice* editorial committee reserves the right to edit anything submitted prior to its publication.



Intergroup 17 Meetings Everyone invited!

Open to all. Learn more about AA, Intergroup, and the great opportunities for service work .

Next Meeting
Sunday, June 13, 5:15 pm
St. Mark's UMC
1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

Free Subscription. The Voice by e-mail.



For your free monthly subscription, send an e-mail with "Free Voice" in the subject line to: thevoice@aaocalamarion.org

The Voice by e-mail is in PDF format. Requires Adobe Reader software. Free download available at www.adobe.com. Printed copies available at Intergroup office.

Intergroup 17 Ocala-Marion County Florida

3666-A N.E. 25th Street
Ocala, Florida 34470
Phone: 352-867-0660
Email: info@aaocalamarion.org
Website: aaocalamarion.org

Hours of operation

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

365 days a year
24-hour Hotline
352-867-0660

Service. The Third Legacy.

District 17 . Committee chairs and other service positions. Volunteers needed.

We need several volunteers to serve in Committee Chair and other service positions. To learn more attend the next district meeting, 6 pm, Thursday, June 24, 2010, St. Marks UMC, 1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

Hotline & 12th Step calls.

Intergroup has a critical need for volunteers to answer our 24-Hour Hotline "after business hours" from their own home or cell phones. Others are needed to help respond to 12th Step calls. One year of sobriety required. Call Intergroup 17 to volunteer: 352-867-0660.

Put yourself out front! As an Intergroup 17 Office Volunteer.

Get some more life into your life. Volunteer to staff the Intergroup office. Help is needed especially on Wednesday afternoons and Saturdays up until 2 pm, but other times are available. One year of sobriety required. To learn more, call 352 867-0660.

Through The Grapevine!

Many of our brothers and sisters in area corrections facilities enjoy reading *The AA Grapevine*. Drop off your old copies at the Intergroup Office, or coordinate a group effort through your GSR.

Take the message to local correctional institutions.

Participation requires prior approval. Applications available at Intergroup 17 office.

Women's Meetings

There is a critical need to carry the message to women in prison (women only). To learn more, call 352 867-0660.

Men's Meetings

To learn more, call 352 867-0660.

Publicize your group's service opportunities in The Voice. Call 352 867-0660 or email to thevoice@aaocalamarion.org

Attitude of GrAAitude

A tremendous thank you to all the groups and individuals that contributed \$1 or more to Intergroup 17 in April, including:

- Acceptance Group
- Alive & Well Group
- All You Need Group
- As Bill Sees It Group
- Breakfast Club
- Forest Group
- Fountain of Gratitude Group
- God's Way Group
- Grateful Gal's Group
- Headstart Group
- Last Call Group
- Living Sober Group
- Ocala Group
- Primary Purpose Group
- Shores of Sobriety Group
- Young People's Group

All who have contributed this fiscal year are thanked on page 5.

Intergroup 17 is especially grateful to all who volunteer to staff the office and hotline, maintain our website, produce our publications, and maintain the office: Alison C, Bill J, Bobby J, Bosch, Connie C, Diane M, Holly M, James N, Jason B, John P, Katie, Kelly T, Max R, Mike G, Pat H, Peggy N, Priscilla P, Rafael Q, Sue Ellen, Toni Marie C. If we've left anyone out, we sincerely apologize. Let us know, we'll make amends.

Priscilla P, Intergroup 17 Office Manager