



The Voice



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Intergroup District 17-3666A N.E. 25th St., Ocala, FL 34470 - aaocalaintergroup@gmail.com - 352-867-0660 – Open Weekdays 10:00 am-5:00 pm Sat.10:00am-2:00pm

WHO IS A MEMBER OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS?

—1946—

(Tradition Three grew out of this piece - Bill W. in The A.A. Grapevine)

The first edition of the book “Alcoholics Anonymous” makes this brief statement about membership: “The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking. We are not allied with any particular faith, sect, or denomination nor do we oppose anyone. We simply wish to be helpful to those who are afflicted.” This expressed our feelings as of 1939, the year our book was published.

Since that day all kinds of experiments with membership have been tried. The numbers of membership rules which have been made (and mostly broken!) are legion. Two or three years ago the General Office asked the group to list their membership rules and send them in. After they arrived we set them all down. They took a great many sheets of paper. A little reflection upon these many rules brought us to an astonishing conclusion. If all of these edicts had been in force everywhere at once it would have been practically impossible for any alcoholic to have ever joined Alcoholics Anonymous. About nine-tenths of our oldest and best members could never have got by!

In some cases we would have been too discouraged by the demands made upon us. Most of the early members of A.A. would have been thrown out because they slipped too much, because their morals were too bad, because they had mental as well as alcoholic difficulties. Or, believe it or not, because they did not come from the so-called better classes of society. We oldsters could have been excluded for our failure to read the book “Alcoholics Anonymous” or the refusal of our sponsor to vouch for us as a candidate. And so on ad infinitum. The way our “worthy” alcoholics have sometimes tried to judge the “less worthy” is, as we look back on it, rather comical. Imagine, if you can, one alcoholic judging another!

At one time or another most A.A. groups go on rule-making benders. Naturally enough, too, as a group commences to grow rapidly it is confronted with many alarming problems. Panhandlers begin to panhandle. Members get drunk and sometimes get others drunk with them. Those with mental difficulties throw depressions or break out into paranoid denunciations of fellow members. Gossips gossip and righteously denounce the local Wolves and Red Riding Hoods. Newcomers argue that they aren’t alcoholics at all, but keep coming around anyway. “Slippees” trade on the fair name of A.A. in order to get themselves jobs. Others refuse to accept all the Twelve Steps of the recovery program. Some go still further, saying that the “God business” is bunk and quite unnecessary. Under these conditions our conservative program—abiding members get scared. These appalling conditions must be controlled, they think, else A.A. will surely go to rack and ruin. They view with alarm for the good of the movement!

At this point the group enters the rule and regulation phase. Charters, bylaws and membership rules are excitedly passed and authority is granted committees to filter out undesirable and discipline the evildoers. Then the Group Elders, no clothes with authority, commence to get busy. Recalcitrants are cast into the outer darkness; respectable busybodies throw stone at the sinners. As for the so-called sinners, they either insist on staying around, or else they form a new group of their own. Or maybe they join a more congenial and less intolerant crowd in their neighborhood. The elders soon discover that the rules and regulations aren’t working

very well. Most attempts at enforcement generate such waves of dissension and intolerance in the group that this condition is presently recognized to be worse for the group life than the very worst that the worst ever did.

After a time fear and intolerance subside. The group survives unscathed. Everybody has learned a great deal. So it is that few of us are any longer afraid of what any newcomer can do to our A.A. reputation or effectiveness. Those who slip, those who panhandle, those who scandalize, those with mental twists, those who rebel at the program, those who trade on the A.A. reputation—all such persons seldom harm an A.A. group for long. Some of these have become our most respected and best loved. Some have remained to try our patience, sober nevertheless. Others have drifted away. We have begun to regard these not as menaces, but rather as our teachers. They oblige us to cultivate patience, tolerance, and humility. We finally see that they are only people sicker than the rest of us, that we who condemn them are Pharisees whose false righteousness does our group the deeper spiritual damage.

Every older A.A. shudders when he remembers the names of persons he once condemned; people he confidently predicted would never sober up; persons he was sure ought to be thrown out of A.A. for the good of the movement. Now that some of these very persons have been sober for years, and may be numbered among his best friends, the old-timer thinks to himself, “What if everybody had judged these people as I once did? Where would they be now?”

That is why we all judge the newcomer less and less. If alcohol is an uncontrollable problem to him and he wishes to do something about it, that is enough for us. We care not whether his case is severe or light, whether his morals are good or bad, whether he has other complications or not. Our A.A. door stands wide open, and if he passes through it and commences to do anything at all about his problem, he is considered a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. He signs nothing, agrees to nothing, promises nothing. We demand nothing. He joins us on his own say-so. Nowadays, in most groups, he doesn’t even have to admit he is an alcoholic. He can join A.A. on the mere suspicion that he may be one, that he may already show the fatal symptoms of our malady.

Of course this is not the universal state of affairs throughout A.A. Membership rules still exist. If a member persists in coming to meetings drunk he may be led outside; we may ask someone to take him away. But in most groups he can come back the next day, if sober. Though he may be thrown out of a club, nobody thinks of throwing him out of A.A. He is a member as long as he says he is. While this broad concept of A.A. membership is not yet unanimous, it does represent the main current of A.A. thought today. We do not wish to deny anyone his chance to recover from alcoholism. We wish to be just as inclusive as we can, never exclusive.

Perhaps this trend signifies something much deeper than a mere change of attitude on the question of membership. Perhaps it means that we are losing all fear of those violent emotional storms which sometimes cross our alcoholic world; perhaps it bespeaks our confidence that every storm will be followed by a calm; a calm which is more understanding, more compassionate, more tolerant than any we ever knew before. *Reprinted from pamphlet “A.A. Tradition How it Developed by Bill W. with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.*

Intergroup Contributions Fiscal Year to Date

6/1/12-5/31/13		
Group Name	Jan.	Y/T/D
164 Pages		41.76
Alive & Well		0.00
All You Need		68.00
Anonymity	1.78	7.52
Bellevue Group		300.00
Bellevue Eye Opener	50.00	70.00
Bellevue God's Way		0.00
Blichton Road	13.00	69.00
Breakfast Club	266.00	1236.86
Cabin in the Woods	100.00	403.00
Came to Believe		46.71
A Light in Citra		0.00
Conscious Contact		0.00
Eleventh Step		0.00
Experience Strength & Hope		0.00
Forest Group		94.58
Forest Men's Group	25.00	125.00
Fort McCoy Group	0.64	0.64
Fountain of Gratitude	0.39	41.14
Freedom House		29.76
Free To Be	100.00	185.69
Fresh Start		1.37

Grace Group		71.83
Grateful Gals	38.00	111.50
Grupo Mano Abierta		25.00
Happy Hour		90.00
Happy, Joyous and Free	323.31	1977.27
Headstart		413.34
The Healing Group		0.00
Heavy Hitters	3.41	8.69
Into Action		0.00
It's Not Them		0.00
Keep It Green		0.00
Joy of Living		0.00
Keep It Simple		115.98
Last Call		2.58
Living Sober	75.00	308.55
Lunch Bunch		80.00
McIntosh Group		0.00
Marion Oaks 12 Step		0.00
Mid Afternoon Group		4.25
New Attitudes	0.23	37.89
Ocala Group	23.87	838.18
Ocala Men's	329.50	329.50
One Day at a Time		500.00
Primary Purpose		97.00

Serenity Group		50.00
Shores Of Sobriety		50.23
Sisters of Serenity		0.00
Sober Yankees		74.10
Start a New Life		0.00
Stop Whining & Sober Up		0.00
Strength in Numbers	92.00	197.66
Summerfield Group		0.00
Sundae Social		0.00
TLC		4.85
Thursday Night Step		40.00
Together We Can		0.00
Total Surrender		116.00
We Give Up		56.75
We Give Thanks		6.55
Weir Crazy		368.50
Young People's Group		100.00
District #17	427.50	1600.97
Birthday Club	89.00	731.00
Double Nickel		0.00
Faithful Fivers		15.00
Individual Members	37.63	301.02
Total	1996.26	11445.22

THANK YOU FOR CONTRIBUTING ☺

Mark Your Calendar

St. Patrick's Day Dance

Sat., March 16th 9 pm - Midnight
 \$5.00 per person
 DJ, 50/50 Raffle & more.
 St. Mark's United Methodist
 1839 NE 8th Rd., Ocala 34470
 Please bring finger foods
 Hosted by Ocala YPG
 Get your Green On!!!



Sober Yankees Group

3rd Anniversary
 Steps 4 and 5 Workshop
 Sat. March 23, 1:00-4:00 pm
 Our Redeemer Lutheran
 5200 SW State Rd 200, 34474

Intergroup Rep Meeting

Sun., Mar. 10, 4:30 pm
 Intergroup Office
 3666A NE 25th St.
 Ocala 34470
 Steering Committee follows.

District 17 Meeting

Thurs. Mar. 28, 6:45 pm
 St. Mark's United Methodist
 1839 NE 8th Rd., Ocala 34470
 G.S.R's are encouraged to attend

Speaker Meetings

Unity, Service, Recovery Group
 Fri., 7:30pm Open
 The Ritz Historic Inn
 1205 East Silver Springs Blvd.
 Ocala, 34470

Experience, Strength & Hope
 1st Fri. of the month 7:00pm
 Church of Christ
 2750 Maricamp Rd.
 Ocala, 34471-5583

Living Sober Group

2nd Sun. of the month
March Speaker – Tracy W.
 First Congregational UC C,
 7171 State Rd. 200, Ocala 34476-7055

Meditation

Conscious Contact Group
 Wed., 7:00 pm Open
 St. Matthew's Lutheran
 3452 NE Silver Springs Blvd.
 Ocala, 34470-6405

Emotional Balance Group

Thurs., 5:30 pm Open
 Oakbrook Center for Spiritual Living
 1009 NE 28th Ave., Ocala, 34470

Spanish Speaking

Grupo Mano Abierta
 Monday & Friday 7:00 pm
 St. John's Methodist
 12390 West State Rd. 328
 Ocala, 34482-6955



Step Three - Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood God.*

“Being convinced, we were at Step Three, which is that we decided to turn our will and life over to God as we understood Him.” Just what do we mean by that and what do we do? The first thing we must be convinced of is the first two steps; that we are alcoholics and that there is a power **greater** than ourselves that can restore our sanity. Bill Wilson uses the first 93 pages in the Big Book 3rd Edition, (beginning with the cover page) describing the way we think, act and behave, and seeking to convince us that God alone can and will relieve us of the obsession to drink. Up to this point all we have done is consider membership in A.A. We have been observers. (Membership in A.A. is not a spectator sport.) Step Three is the first time we are asked to do anything other than think about what we have read to this point, yet again, Bill Wilson asks that we think *well* before taking this step making sure we are ready; that we could at last abandon ourselves utterly to Him. This caution is in place because we must work all the remaining steps in order to

complete step three. It is also important to note this is the only step we are told to **stop** and **think** about it before we proceed. (Ask yourself do I have any good ideas left?) the idea that I can drink like a normal person has to be smashed.

In the early days we were required to take this step with everyone that wanted to participate after a meeting, reciting the prayer from the book and voicing it without reservation. This is still common in many areas of this country. We are cautioned that this action will have little or no lasting effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face and be rid of the things in ourselves that had been blocking us.

This process *begins* the first step toward being relieved of the terrible obsession to drink and a return to sanity that enables us to live reasonably happy in this world. (We absolutely insist on enjoying life.) Frank W.
Reprinted from *A.A. Big Book p.60* with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

Concept III - As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relation between the groups, the Conference, the A.A. General Service Board and its several service corporations, staffs, committees and executives, and of thus insuring their effective leadership, it is here suggested that we endow each of these elements of world service with a traditional “Right of Decision.”

To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A. —the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives—with a traditional “Right of Decision.”

- Do we understand what is meant by the “Right of Decision”? Do we grant it at all levels of service or do we “instruct”?
- Do we trust our trusted servants — G.S.R., D.C.M., area delegate, the Conference itself?

Reprinted from The A.A. Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service by Bill W. with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

Alcoholism Treatment at Towns Hospital

Just as it took the temperance movement a long time to value the drunk as a person, it took the medical profession many years to see the necessity of adequate treatment for alcoholics. Towns Hospital in New York City, where Bill W. eventually got sober, was one of the first to recognize the importance of good medical treatment for alcoholics.

In a 1979 article written for “The Modern Hospital,” its founder, Dr. Charles Towns, a good friend of A.A., wrote that “the alcoholic is the most abused and neglected of sick patients.” The medical profession, he wrote, has not “appreciated the fact that the alcoholic cannot be arbitrarily deprived of his alcoholic stimulants without the doctor having to deal with delirium tremors.”

No alcoholic, Towns said, “has a fair chance when he is simply sobered up. Unless something medically definite is done for the chronic alcoholic, his end is either the madhouse or the morgue. . . . At the present time alcoholism is treated as a disgrace. The alcoholic is humiliated, punished, and still further degraded, and society is doing everything it possibly can to destroy him utterly. This is all wrong.”

In the 1930s, Bill W. came under the care of Dr. William D. Silkworth at Towns. “The little doctor who loved drunks,” as Bill later called him, Silkworth introduced to A.A. the basic concept of

alcoholism as a disease – an obsession of the mind, coupled with an “allergy,” as he called it, of the body.

After Bill’s transforming experience at Towns, he left the hospital and, following Silkworth’s counsel, went to work with other drunks. After several months of notable failure on Bill’s part, the doctor again set him straight. Silkworth gave the co-founder of A.A. what Bill later called in AA Comes of Age “a great piece of advice,” without which, “A.A. might never have been born.”

Silkworth cautioned Bill against “preaching” to alcoholics or trying immediately to sell them on Oxford Group precepts like absolute honesty. The doctor advised Bill to discuss his own experience with “the obsession that condemns them to drink and the physical sensitivity or allergy of the body that condemns them to go mad or die if they keep on drinking.”

This advice set the stage for Bill’s meeting with Dr. Bob – a meeting in which Bob, the medical man, understood for the first time the medical facts of his own disease. That meeting, which Dr. Bob had envisioned as a fifteen minute courtesy call, lasted all night and into the following day, and the miracle of one alcoholic talking to another has since changed the lives of millions of suffering alcoholics.



Chis A. – Archives Chair
Reprinted from Markings, your archives interchange Vol. 24 -No. 1-March - April 2004with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc


From your DCM (District Committee Member) - Carson F. LOOKING FOR ALL GENERAL SERVICE REPS (GSR) We are looking for all District 17 GSRs! Does your Group have a GSR and an Alternate GSR? Do you support your GSR to attend the District 17 meetings and North Florida Area Conference (NFAC)? Your GSR is a vital link between your Group, the District and the Area. Your voice counts.....only if you are represented by your GSR.**Wanted: GSRs** 11th Step Group, All You Need Group, Came to Believe, Carry This Message 4th Dimension, Experience, Strength & Hope, Lunch Bunch, and Unity Service Recovery Group.

Women’s Corrections - Pen pals needed. Your anonymity will be secure as the mail is handled through the Intergroup office. Your address will never be disclosed. Would you be willing to carry an A.A. meeting to a Marion County prison? Contact Lori M. by calling 352.867.0660.

Local Club News - Lost & Found Club, 2315 NE 29th Terr., Ocala, FL 34470 Phone: 352.622.2360

Bingo is back! Saturday, March 2nd, 9:00 pm to 11:30 pm. *Car wash!* Sunday, Mar. 3rd, 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm at Krystal’s 2420 SW College Rd.34471. Suggested donation \$5.00. Want to start a new group? We have what you need. Time slots available are: 7:00am – 9:00am Mon. – Sun., 2:00pm 6:00pm, Mon., Tue., Wed., Thurs., Sat., Sun., Full snack bar, covered outdoor area, WiFi, and TV available. The Board meets the 2nd Sat. of the month at 2:00pm. All are welcome, suggestions, too.

 **Congratulations! March Birthdays** 

Sharon R. 1	Tony F. 3	Jim 10	February	Steve N. 2	Doug L. 8
Chris L. 1	Beth T. 4	Bill U. 12	Lourie L. 1	Justin W. 2	Nancee B. 8
Dave T. 1	Diane W. 4	Brian J. 18	Jim N. 1	Maeve 3	Diane B. 25
Hillary K. 1	Katie C. 4	Carson F. 26	Daniel 1	Pam B. 4	Tom I. 31
Jennifer F. 1	Christina B. 5	Mary D. 30	Julie K. 1	Sue Ellen 4	Don C. 32
Pattie S. 1	Lydia N. 6	Andy E. 30	Steve S. 1	Theresa S. 5	Greg T. 32
Robert D. 1	Christa 8	John V. 33	Trina S. 1	Michael 6	Mary D. 38
Rick D. 2	Renee V. 8	Charlotte P. 41	Jeni Lou 2	Andy K. 7	Camden A. 48
Carl K. 3	Mary M. 9		Matt T. 2	Marvin P. 7	
Matt R. 3	Dennis 9		Ronnie G. 2	Maria W. 8	

Participate in The Birthday Plan - In grateful celebration of their sobriety birthdays, many A.A. members contribute one dollar 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 the monthly newsletter, The Voice. Also, a receipt and 'thank you' letter will be sent to your group.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

New Meetings. Please support them.

Eureka Group
 Thurs. 7:00 pm
 Mill Creek Baptist
 16350 NE 148th Terr. Rd.
 Fort McCoy, FL 32134
 Open Discussion

Open Circle Group
 Sat., 7:00 pm
 12332 Hwy. 301
 Belleview 34420
 Open Discussion

Reddick 4th Dimension Group Fri., 7:30pm
 Open Big Book
 Friendship Baptist Church
 15115 NW Gainesville Rd.,
 32686 at Old Gainesville Rd.
 & Hwy. 25A

Mid Afternoon Group
 Fri., 2:30pm Open Books
 Lost and Found Club,
 2315 NE 29th Terr.
 Ocala, 34470

Intergroup Insights

Looking for a service position? A desk volunteer is needed Saturdays from 10:00am to 2:00pm. The "After Hours" team has a slot open for the Friday 5:00pm – 10:00am shift. One year of continuous sobriety is required. The Steering Committee Co-Chair position is still vacant. Two years is required. If you are new to A.A. and would like to help, call us. 352.867.0660.



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