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In this issue

The Best She Could.....1-2
 Necessary Work.....3
 Announcements.....4-5
 Birthdays & Contributions.....6

September 2026 issue of The Voice

Step 9—"Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."

SEPTEMBER 2026 | SPONSORSHIP | STEP NINE

The Best She Could

BY: MICHAEL M. PALM | SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

Not yet a peace with an amends to his mom, he took a deeper dive and discovered more truths about her and himself

One night, four years ago, the speaker at my home group told an inspiring story about reconciling with his alcoholic mother just before she died. "She did the best she could," he said. Afterward, when he called on me to share, I said, "My mother did not do the best she could. She did a lousy job!"

At this point, I had been sober for 30 plus years. I had done a lot of Step work, including inventories about my mother and amends to her. I also got outside help. How could I still be so angry, so full of resentment, after all this time? I had no answer.

Today, however, my anger and resentment are gone. I have forgiven her and myself. Unfortunately, the kind of reconciliation that the speaker talked about with his mother is not possible with mine. My mother died a year before I got sober. And yet, reconciled is how I now feel. How did this happen?

In my first Fourth Step, the resentments toward my mother filled several pages. I blamed her for all my problems, especially crippling anxiety. When I got to my Eighth Step list I had no idea how to make amends to someone who was no longer alive to receive them. But my sponsor did. Here are some of the amends that I made. I wrote a letter that acknowledged and apologized for the many ways that I had made her life more difficult, and read it at her gravesite. I committed to stay in the lives of my troubled younger sister and brother.

I took a trip to Hawaii, a place my mother loved. At the hotel where my parents spent their honeymoon, I sat at the cafe overlooking the beach. I had a photo of my parents sitting at a table, probably no more than a few feet from where I now sat. Suddenly it occurred to me that my mother had not come to Hawaii on her honeymoon to think up ways to make my life miserable. She and my father had come to celebrate the life that they surely imagined lay before them, not the sorrowful one that unfolded. Twisted by resentment, this somehow came to me as a surprise. Nevertheless, my anger soon returned; it would always be with me, I thought. But years later, I stumbled into something that changed what I thought and felt about my mother.

After my mother died my father told us that she had been adopted (a family secret) and that she had no interest in ever finding her birth parents. But I did. I couldn't figure out how to proceed and let it go for years. Then a close AA friend, a talented amateur genealogist, suggested how I might learn about my mother's birth parents. I got a DNA test and uploaded the results to a genealogy website; it immediately produced a family tree. At my mother's name, the branch took an abrupt turn into the unknown with people and places that I didn't recognize. A non-profit organization that assisted adoptees and their children

Continued on p. 2

Important Dates

September 13th —Noon

(always 2nd Sunday)

Intergroup/Central Office

Representative meet

Lost & Found

616 S. Pine Ave

September 24th-6:30 PM

District 17

monthly meeting

Lost & Found Club

616 S. Pine Ave

Every Thursday Area 14

Service Workshop, 6pm

Hospitality, 5:45pm

New Topic every Thursday

Zoom Meeting ID:

828 5682 4762; pw: service

FAITHFUL FIVERS

Contribute \$5/month

or \$60/year

Contributors:

Joe S, Phil H,

Ralph W, Ginger H

Linda H, Stephanie D,

Casey P

Your membership directly

supports 12-Step work at

District 17 Central Office

GRAPEVINE Daily Quote

August 31, 2026

"Those of us who saw the shadow of the butterfly net overhead are blessed if we get to know than an open mind can save."

Worcester, MA, March 1952, From:
 "Honest, Open-Minded, Willing"
 AA Grapevine



Continued from p. 1

agreed to help me. Eventually they located her adoption files. I learned the following:

My mother's birth mother was 15 when she got pregnant. She had only recently lost her own mother to cancer and struggled with grief. She dropped out of high school. She spent time in a juvenile facility where her father had sent her. Less is known about my mother's birth father. They met when he arrived on shore leave one weekend. They never saw each other again. After my mother's birth, she was placed in a state orphanage. The orphanage sent her to families for possible adoption; each time, was returned. The file suggests she may have been abused in the process. The social workers expressed concern about how hard my mother worked to make herself into whatever she thought a prospective family wanted her to be. However, the account of her eventual adoption reads like the unexpected happy ending to a Jane Austin novel, a sudden reversal of fortune.

The social workers placed my mother, age 4, with a couple who had lost their only daughter to a childhood disease; they very much wanted to adopt a little girl. They gave my mother a wonderful childhood. Her marriage to my father had been a happy one, at least for a time. But her beloved adopted parents died. My father's business went bankrupt and closed. He seemed frozen in place, unsure what to do. Money was tight and getting tighter. My mother, surely frightened, started drinking heavily.

My parents separated, then divorced. My mother had to find a job of her own to support three young children and a place where we could live. Her drinking worsened. When drunk, she muttered to herself about ending her life. When sober, she worried the state would take her

children away. But as time passed, she managed to hold a job, keep a roof over our heads, put food on the table, take us on the occasional vacation and launch us into adulthood. My mother did the best she could and then some.

Don't get me wrong. I remain clear-eyed about the chaos, fear and threat of violence that hung over my adolescence, leaving me an anxious, self-loathing "adult" who needed alcohol to cope. I now see how remarkable it all was, all that she did for her children, despite the hand that she'd been dealt. I don't know if she ever considered AA. I do know that I got the gift of sobriety that she did not. The least I could do is forgive and love her, no more, no less, than I want to be forgiven and loved myself.

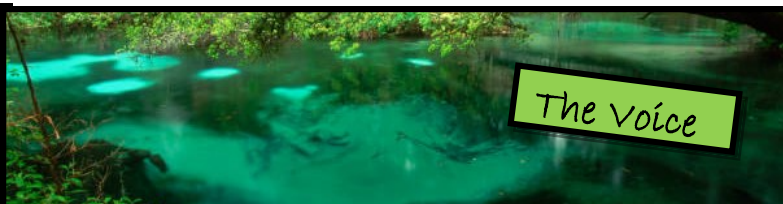
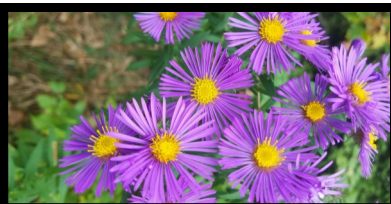
I once viewed my earlier amends as "failed." I thought they gave me enough relief from my anger and regret to stay sober, even though the effect did not seem to endure over time. Now I think these amends softened me to stay sober—and cracked open my closed mind. When the time came, and I received all this new information about my mother, I could understand what it meant and what to do with it.

Finally, this is my experience only. Many AAs have far more difficult stories than mine. I've listened to many speakers—and Fifth Steps—over the years, who have spoken about parents who certainly did not do the best they could. But my mother did, while battling her worsening alcoholism. This new way of seeing my mother alone does not change the negative effects of growing up under the lash of her alcoholism. And yet, I don't blame her anymore. I don't feel angry. What I do feel is freedom.

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***Gratitude Dinner Committee—
Saturday, September 19th
@ 9:00 AM—Lost & Found Club***

***PLEASE NOTE—OFFICE HOURS Week of 9/14 & 9/21
OFFICE OPEN—9/14 & 9/15— 8:00 AM -4:00 PM AND
9/24 & 9/25— 8:00 AM—4:00 PM
Please plan accordingly - there will be phone coverage***



Tradition 9—"AA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

SEPTEMBER 2026 | SPONSORSHIP | STEP NINE

Necessary Work

BY: BILL W. | EXCERPT. ORIGINAL TITLE: "EDITORIAL: ON THE 9TH TRADITION," GRAPEVINE, AUGUST 1948

Our cofounder shares about looking for the balance between simplicity and necessity to get the job of AA done

The least possible organization, that's our universal ideal. No fees, no dues, no rules imposed on anybody, one alcoholic bringing recovery to the next; that's the substance of what we most desire, isn't it?

But how shall this simple ideal best be realized? Often a question, that.

We have, for example, the kind of AA who is for simplicity. Terrified of anything organized, he tells us that AA is getting too complicated. He thinks money only makes trouble, committees only make dissension, elections only make politics, paid workers only make professionals and that clubs only coddle slipees. Says he, let's get back to coffee and cakes by cozy firesides. If any alcoholics stray our way, let's look after them. But that's enough. Simplicity is our answer.

Quite opposed to such halcyon simplicity is the AA promoter. Left to himself he would "bang the cannon and twang the lyre" at every crossroad of the world. Millions for drunks, great AA hospitals, batteries of paid organizers and publicity experts wielding all the latest paraphernalia of sound and script; such would be our promoter's dream. "Yes sir," he would bark. "My two year plan calls for one million AA members by 1950!"

For one, I'm glad we have both conservatives and enthusiasts. They teach us much. The conservative will surely see to it that the AA movement never gets over-organized. But the promoter will continue to remind us of our terrific obligation to the newcomer and to those hundreds of thousands of alcoholics still waiting all over the world to hear of AA.

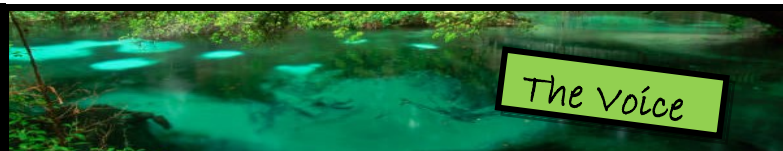
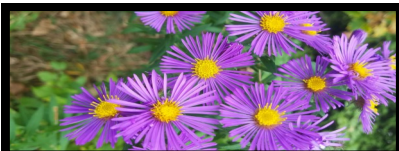
We shall, naturally, take the firm and safe middle course. AA has always violently resisted the idea of any general organization. Yet, paradoxically, we have ever stoutly insisted upon organizing certain special services; mostly those absolutely necessary to effective and plentiful 12th Step work.

If, for instance, an AA group elects a secretary or rotating committee, if an area forms an intergroup committee, if we set up a Foundation, a General Office or a Grapevine, then we are organized for service. The AA book and pamphlets, our meeting places and clubs, our dinners and regional assemblies—these are services too. Nor can we secure good hospital connections, properly sponsor new prospects and obtain good public relations just by chance. People have to be appointed to look after these things, sometimes paid people. Special services are performed.

But by none of these special services, has our spiritual or social activity, the great current of AA ever been really organized or professionalized. Yet our recovery program has been enormously aided. While important, these service activities are very small by contrast with our main effort.

As such facts and distinctions become clear, we shall easily lay aside our fears of blighting organization or hazardous wealth. As a movement, we shall remain comfortably poor; for our service expenses are trifling.

With such assurances, we shall without doubt, continue to improve and extend our vital lifelines of special service; to better carry out our AA message to others; to make for ourselves a finer greater society, and, God willing, to assure Alcoholics Anonymous a long life and perfect unity.



**\$15 beforehand
OR at the Door**

**Intergroup/Central Office sponsoring
AA Speaker & Dance w/DJ
Cheese & Crackers, Desserts, Water & Coffee**

Saturday, September 26th 2026— 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Compassion United Methodist Church

1712 SE Lake Weir Avenue

***** 50/50 and ** Several Basket Raffles***



GRATITUDE DINNER

5:30 PM

Nov 7th, 2026

Mary Sue Rich Community Center

1821 NW 21st Ave, Ocala, FL

To Know a New Freedom and Happiness

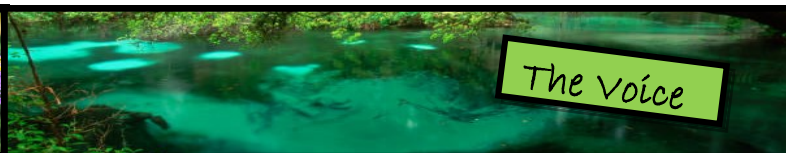
\$30 per ticket

Tickets available from your group's
General Service Representative (GSR)

Google Maps
Scan Here



Tickets available after
September 24th



HOPE LIVES HERE

A Benefit for Dr. Bob's Home

*Proceeds Support Dr. Bob's Home, 855 Ardmore Ave, Akron, OH 44302
Dr. Bob Smith, co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous*

Saturday, October 17th, 2026

10 AM—3 PM—Doors Open 9:30 AM

Graceway Church

10200 Morningside Drive

Leesburg, FL 34788

Featuring GAIL L. — ARCHIVIST

- The History of Dr. Bob's Home
- The History of the Writing of the Big Book

Tickets—\$32 Per Person (Use QR code below)

INCLUDES BOX LUNCH and DRINK



For more information contact:
Andy D. | awcd7@gmail.com | (352) 933-6353

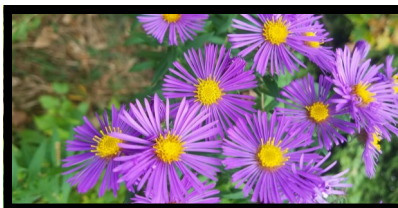
MEMBER'S CORNER

**Marion County AA members invited to share any
inspiring story or Quotes**

*Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to
change the world.*

*Today I am wise,
so I am changing myself.*

- Rumi



Birthdays SEPTEMBER

Bellevue Group

Dave W—3

Scott S—3

Breakfast Club

Tony R—4

Barry K—14

Diane L—29

Torn A—42

Headstart

Morgan—1

Ed S—37

Living Sober

Tony C—2

Tracey M—6

Lori B—8

Eddie R—9

Dennis W—17

Tom O—19

Keith—25

We Give Up

August missed

Lesley P—36

September

Lisa H—16

Congratulations!

Cannot get out to an in-person meeting consider On-Line Zoom meetings:

** Headstart Online—Monday-Saturday

@ 7:30am

Meeting ID: 851 0420 7447 NO Password

** Any Link to Get It—Mon, Wed, Th & Fri

@ Noon—Meeting ID: 942 2087 6165

Password: 757281

** Sisters in Sobriety Online Alternative

Saturdays @ 10:00 am

Meeting ID: 839 1876 4624; Password 021917

** Ocala Men's Group—10:00 am

Meeting ID: 13588645 NO Password

Contributions AUGUST

Alive and Well \$ 50.00

Anonymity \$ 64.00

Cabin in the Woods \$ 100.00

Headstart \$ 274.23

Mano Abierta \$ 20.00

One Day At A Time \$ 150.00

Thank you for supporting your
local Intergroup Office

From the GSO Pamphlet

*Self-support;
Where Money and Spiritually Mix (F-3)*

10% to District 17

P.O. Box 3081, Ocala, FL 34478

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### 10% to Area 14 \*\*\*\*\*

NFAC Treasurer

P.O. Box 840066

St. Augustine, FL 32080

\*\*\*\*\**(Address changes every two years. Visit  
www.aanorthflorida.org for correct address)*

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30% to General Service Office
*PO Box 459, Grand Central Station,
New York, NY 10163*

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50% to Central Office/Intergroup 17  
*616 S Pine Avenue  
Ocala, FL 34471*

Go to AA Ocala website: [aaocalamarion.org](http://aaocalamarion.org) for more On-line meetings