Intergroup District 17

3666A NE 25th St., Ocala, FL Phone: 352-867-0660 aaocalaintegroup@gmail.com Office Hours Mon. -Fri. 10 - 5 Sat. 2-5pm Next Meeting at Intergroup Sunday, April 9, 2014 Intergroup Reps 4:30 pm Steering Committee to follow

Intergroup District 17 Ocala, Marion County, Florida

The Voice

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

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Step Four: Where's My Rocket? Practicing the program in a practical way

In early October 1993, I was dropped off in the middle of rainy nowhere and shuffled into the intake chamber of a rehab. I was scared. I was a long way from my cozy single room occupancy on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, and I hadn't been out of New York in many years.

That's where I first learned about the Twelve Steps of recovery; that Alcoholics Anonymous was my only hope; that only a psychic change and a spiritual awakening could cease the inevitable downward progression of my alcoholism. That's where I first heard Dr. Bob's prescription: Trust God, clean house, help another alcoholic. The process of taking inventory, however frenetically, had already begun.

After leaving the hospital, I spent the next year going to AA meetings every night without fail. I got involved. I counted days in a home group where I sat in the front row and raised my hand, shared, and asked for help. I made coffee, I arrived early and stayed late, I helped set up and break down, and I collected phone numbers and then actually used them. I read literature, took suggestions, and became a member of the Fel-

On Tradition Four

"Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole."

"With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the trustees of The Alcoholic Foundation. On such issues our common welfare is paramount."

This Tradition, Number 4, is a specific application of general principles already outlined in Traditions 1 and 2.

Tradition 1 states, "Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward."

Tradition 2 states, "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience."

With these concepts in mind, let us look more closely at Tradition 4. The first sentence of Tradition 4 guarantees each A.A. group local autonomy. With respect to its own affairs, the group may make any decisions, adopt any attitudes that it likes. No over-all or intergroup authority should challenge this primary privilege. We feel this ought to be so, even though the group might sometimes act with complete indifference to our tradition. For example, an A.A. group could, if it wished, hire a paid preacher and support him out of the proceeds of a group night club. Though such an absurd procedure

lowship.

I couldn't wait to do this mythical Fourth Step I kept hearing about. It seemed to tower in the distance with great monolithic significance. I heard, "If you don't do a Fourth, you'll pick up a fifth," and "You're only as sick as your secrets." I did a lot of writing, trying to sort out everything that was happening to me. So, the business of putting pen to paper did not seem so daunting. I found it quite helpful. Some fellow AAs seemed genuinely terrified at the thought of writing a Fourth Step, but I was looking forward to the adventure. Of all the Twelve Steps it seemed to glow the brightest, or fiercest.

Ultimately, in the course of eleven years of sobriety, I've done three thorough inventories of myself. A Fourth Step is comprised of three main components: resentments, fears, and sex. Fear and sex were all-too-familiar subjects for me, but this resentment jive, what was that all about? The word was not part of my lexicon. I knew it had something to do with annoyance or anger but, perhaps because I was so disconnected from my emotions, the concept didn't exist for me.

One day I came across the French word Continued on page 2 →

would be miles outside our tradition, the group's "right to be wrong" would be held inviolate. We are sure that each group can be granted, and safely granted, these most extreme privileges. We know that our familiar process of trial and error would summarily eliminate both the preacher and the night club. Those severe growing pains which invariably follow any radical departure from A.A. tradition can be absolutely relied upon to bring an erring group back into line. An A.A. group need not be coerced by any human government over and above its own members. Their own experience, plus A.A. opinion in surrounding groups, plus God's prompting in their group conscience would be sufficient. Much travail has already taught us this. Hence we may confidently say to each group, "You should be responsible to no other authority than your own conscience."

Yet please note one important qualification. It will be seen that such extreme liberty of thought and action applies only to the group's own affairs. Rightly enough, this Tradition goes on to say, "But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, these groups ought to be consulted." Obviously, if any individual, group or regional committee could take an action which might seriously affect the welfare of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, or seriously disturb surrounding groups, that would not be liberty at all. It would be sheer license; it would be anarchy, not democracy.

Therefore, we A.A.s have universally adopted the principle of consultation. This means that if a single A.A. group wishes to take any action which might affect surrounding groups, it consults them. Or, if there be one, it confers with the intergroup committee for the area. Likewise, Continued on page $2 \rightarrow$

On Tradition Four if a group or regional committee wishes to take any action that might affect A.A. as a whole, it consults the trustees of The Alcoholic Foundation, who are, in effect, our over-all General Service Committee. For instance, no group or intergroup could feel free to initiate, without consultation, any publicity that might affect A.A. as a whole. Nor could it assume to represent the whole of Alcoholics Anonymous by printing and distributing anything purporting to be A.A. standard literature. This same principle would naturally apply to all similar situations. Though there is no formal compulsion to do so, all undertakings of this general character are customarily checked with our A.A. General Headquarters.

This idea is clearly summarized in the last sentence of Tradition 4, which observes, "On such issues our common welfare is paramount."

Editorial by Bill W. The A.A. Grapevine, March, 1948

Step Four "resentment" and something clicked. If you break the word apart, you have "sentiment" (feeling) and "re" (again). When the time came, I managed to list hundreds of people (individuals and groups), places, institutions, principles, phenomena, and ideas that I resented. Oh, resentment. Now I get it.

I heard in a meeting that an inventory simply took stock of what existed, not the how's and why's. If you were a grocery clerk checking the shelves, you would only note thirteen cans of tomatoes. You wouldn't say, "Well two cans are dented, and one has a label half torn off, and I don't care for this brand so much." You put down only: Thirteen cans of tomatoes. Check. It took me a while to get the idea. I'll tell you how I finally got there.

The sponsor I was working with suggested I write a sex history in order to illuminate my troubles. I dashed off over sixty pages shying away from no episode, no matter how shameful. Fascinating as it all was, I don't know how much it really helped to keep me sober. Ultimately, I worried it was merely a document of shameless exhibitionism masquerading as honesty. However, I did feel tremendously unburdened and much less embarrassed, and having crystallized my plight, I did have a map of the territory.

The next formal inventory I approached took place a few years later when I was again wresting with my life sober. I did it according to the three-column system outlined on page 65 of the Big Book. Again, although it proved illuminating, in the end I felt no genuine relief or greater clarity. Once again, I was disappointed. Maybe I expected too much. Where was my "rocket to the fourth dimension?"

Some years later, still sober in AA, I fell into a depression. A steady rage took over my imagination, blotting out the usual interior parade of sexy apparitions and soothing ruminations. Life seemed dull and meaningless. I hung on as best as I could. I knew I didn't live in a vacuum and any drastic moves would deeply hurt and upset my few loved ones. Still, I felt alone and disappointed. I knew it was time to drink.

One day, I found my way to an early morning meeting across town where I knew no one. I raised my hand, managed to get called on, and I asked for help. Thank God I had a decent foundation and that I was rewired to go to AA for help, not the bottle. I got a new sponsor, something I had been resistant to for years.

When it came time to sit down and write a Fourth Step, my sponsor told me to ask God to bring me into the process and, when I was done writing for the day, to ask God to take me out of it. That way I wouldn't walk around in morbid reflection. I began by addressing fear, with a list of what my sponsor called the twelve universal fears, including fears of people, financial

insecurity, rejection, humiliation, abandonment, and so forth. I wrote a riff on each one. Then I wrote down all my other fears. Although I had talked about many of these issues, I had never written them all down in one place. I was afraid; what if someone should find this list of my weaknesses and use them against me? Call upon your Higher Power and have a sense of humor!

Having done so much work already in the realm of sex and love, I didn't spend too much time on the subject this time. I wanted to get this resentment list going! Unfortunately, I couldn't keep my comments within the confines of the columns. I kept going off the rails into digressions.

So, I called my sponsor and told him: "I can't do this, I can't keep it simple because it's all too complicated to take apart and spread out in any coherent fashion!" He gave me a precolumned grid so that I could plug names on each line and then check off applicable attributes which were neatly arranged across the page. There simply wasn't any room to write anything more than a name in column one, "I am resentful at----," and in column two, a "cause" comprised of maybe four or five of my own words. Column three, "Threatens my/Affects my," was divided as: Social Instinct (subdivided into Material, Emotional); Sex Instinct (subdivided into Acceptable and Hidden Relations); and Ambitions (Social, Security, Sexual). After I had all my names and causes written down I went back to the beginning and checked off in the third column all that applied in each instance. Piece of cake.

The fourth column is not illustrated in the Big Book as the first three columns on page sixty-five are. It's dealt with a page later: "To conclude that others were wrong was as far as most of us ever got. The usual outcome was that people continued to wrong us and we stayed sore This business of resentment is infinitely grave. We found that it is fatal." I bought all that and read on. I looked at my list again and experienced what the book says: "We began to see that the world and its people really dominated us." In the book we are told to pray for these people we resent. So, I did that--I have to or else my whole day is ruined.

Then, I looked at my part. The fourth column on the grid I used was labeled "What is the exact nature of my wrongs, faults, mistakes, defects, short comings?" It is divided into four checkable boxes: Continued on page 4 Selfish, Dishonest, Self-Seeking and Frightened, Inconsiderate/Intolerant. I spent a lot of time considering each of these qualities in relation to each specific instance I referenced in column one. In this way, finally, a clear image was formed of my relationship to the world. I remember hearing people in meetings talk of seeing patterns. Only after completing this process did I understand what they were talking about. Familiar ideas left their abstract domain and became living elements that could be understood. From here I could move on to practice the following Steps in a practical way.

In outpatient, many would exclaim, "We're being brainwashed!" To which a wise counselor would reply, "Look where you are--you need your brain cleaned!" I call upon God daily now to help me and a casual conversation with the Higher Power has become a regular part of my interior monologue. "Oh, here's that fear of humiliation. God, can you take it away? Thanks Oh, there's that pride again, can I get a little help here, please, HP?" That kind of thing.

It's not easy pushing that big rock up the hill each day. I think, Hey, I got out of bed yesterday; I have to do it again today? Well, yeah.

Steve K.—New York, New York

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The Voice April 2014

Congratulations April Birthdays!

This issue we celebrate a collective 417 years — more than 152,204 days of sobriety. One day at a time!

Headstart Happy, Joyous, & Free Kevin D. 16 Liza W. 19 Charley Mc. 16 Geno F. 17 Rex C. 15 Buddy S. 14 Tammy H. 10 Mick P. 9 Cree gM. 10 Veronica W. 2 Fred C. 8 Brian H. 2 Judy M. 6 Roseanne I Jeremy S. 5 **Living Sober** Kim Mc. 4 Beverley H. 32 Bruce H. 4 Anne S. 29 Ambika R. 3 Charlie S. 8 Sabrina C. I Rick L. 6 Erich B. I Larry H. 4 Alecia C. I Dennis M. 2

Glenn K. 2 Sober Yankees Bob D. 28 One Day at a Time

Dewitt I
James 20
Mary 36
Mike A. I
Ronnie 27
Tim 22
We Give Up

Carol W. 22 Carol L. 13 March Birthday Club Sober Yankees—\$36.00

Join the Birthday Club

Celebrate your AA anniversary—with a contribution. Send name, sobriety date, years of sobriety, and a donation suggested is \$1.00 or more for each year of sobriety to:

Intergroup District 17 3666A N.E. 25th Street Ocala, Florida 34470

Mark Your Calendar

- Intergroup Monthly Meeting
- Sun., Apr. 13th, Intergroup Reps 4:30 pm Intergroup District 17 3666A NE 25th St., Ocala 34470

Steering Committee follows. All are welcome to attend.

- Serenity on the Mountain Retreat Apr. 11-13, Fri.-Sun. A Spiritual Retreat for Men Contacts: Dexter Hawkins (864) 650-0290 or Joe Lenderman (864) 718-0044
- 19th Annual Country Round-Up "Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of Life" Apr. 25-27, Fri.-Sun. Ag Center 1424 Jackson Ave. (Hwy. 90) Chipley, FL 32428 Registration \$20.00 before Apr. 20th or \$25.00 at the door, Children 12 and under \$5.00 Sat. evening meal included in Registration Call: (334)372-7979 or (850)768-0311 or (850)768-0457 Email: chip-

ley_countryroundup@hotmail.com

- District 11 Presents the NFA
 Service Workshop Apr. 26th Sharing
 Unity, Service, and Recovery, Crossroads
 Community Church 2436 Croton Rd.
 Melbourne, FL Donation \$7.00 Workshops
 Fellowship, Breakfast and Lunch Provided
 8:30 AM Registration Opening 9:00
 Workshops 9:30-11:45 Lunch with Forum
 Writing Workshop 12:00-1:00 Workshops
 1:45-4:00 Closing 4:15 PM
- District 17 Monthly Meeting April 24, Thurs. 6:45 pm. St. Mark's United Methodist 1839 NE Sanchez Ave. Ocala 34470 All are welcome to attend.
- Headstart Group Anniversary
 Breakfast April 26, 7:00am Breakfast
 7:30am Speaker. Sweet Treats welcome. Donations accepted. All invited. Unity Place 525
 NE Sanchez Ave. Ocala 34470

- The Woodstock of AA

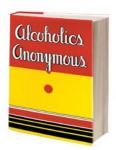
 24th Spring Conference May 2-4, Fri.Sun. Celebrating the Day Bill W. and Dr.
 Bob First Met, Holiday Inn-Orlando International Airport 5750 T.G. Lee Blvd. Orlando
 32822 (407) 851-6400 Mon.-Fri. between 9am
 -5pm Reserve your room by Apr. 18th Registration \$30.00 Workshops, Speakers, etc...
 Call: (407) 273-1646 or Email:
 gyeldell@cfl.rr.com Proceeds from this event
 go to the maintenance and support of Dr.
 Bob's Home, Inc.
- 4th Annual Sunshine Celebrtion
 "Three Pertinent Ideas a. b. c."
 May 16-18, Fri.— Sun. Community Center
 1446 Commerce Dr. Crestview, FL Registration \$25.00 After May. 8th \$30.00 Speakers,
 Down Home Country Cooked Meals are
 included for registered guest. Host hotels:
 Comfort Inn & Suites (850)682-1481 Economy Lodge (850)682-6255 Super 8 Motel
 (850)682-9649 Country Inn & Suites (850)306
 -2020 http://www.sunshineconvention.org/
- Sobriety Variety Showcase
 May 18th, Sun. 12:30-6:30pm Unity Place
 525 Sanchez Ave. Ocala 34470 Free Admission Fine Arts: Sculpture, Paintings, Drawings, Photography Performing Arts: Open
 Mic, Poetry, Skits Carnival Games for Kids:
 Face Painting, Corn Hole Toss, etc... Dunk
 Tank, Food and Beverages Email: sobrietyvarietyshow@gmail.com
- 79th Anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous June 6-8, Fri.-Sun. Akron, Ohio/Birthplace of A.A. http://www.akronaa.org/

• A Design For Living June 20-22 Fri. Sun. Big Book Weekend Celebrating the 79th Anniversary of A.A. with Sandy B., Tampa, FL an Bob B., St. Paul, MN Hilton Airport Westshore 2225 N. Lois Ave. Tampa, FL 33607 (813)877-6688

Groups. Are you planning a event?

Send your information to The Voice for publication. Reach our nearly 400 subscribers.

Deadline for each issue is the 20th of the preceding month. Send to: thevoice@aaocalamarion.org



Alcoholics Anonymous celebrates its 75th
Anniversary by publishing a commemorative First Edition of the Big Book. Prepay for your copy at Intergroup.
Cost is \$13.80.

Interested in preserving the Archives of District 17?

Join the Archives Committee as they begin their work. Sun., Apr. 13, 3:00pm at the Intergroup Office The Voice April 2014

The Voice		
Contributions Fiscal Ye	ear 6/1/13-5/	/31/14
Group Name	February	Y/T/D
164 Pages	28.00	138.76
Alive & Well		30.00
All You Need		137.31
Anonymity		1.15
Belleview Eye Opener		30.00
Belleview God's Way	50.00	150.00
Blichton Station		60.00
Breakfast Club	343.08	1,734.63
Cabin in the Woods		350.63
Conscious Contact		57.00
Eureka Group		55.00
Forest Men's Group		80.00
Fort McCoy Group		95.79
Fountain of Gratitude		30.00
Free To Be		288.50
Grateful Gals	38.58	54.08
Grupo Mano Abierta		20.00
Happy Hour	40.00	90.00
Happy, Joyous, & Free		2,260.50
Headstart	71.18	698.19
The Healing Group		130.00
Heavy Hitters Men	40.00	150.00
Heavy Hitters Women	25.00	25.00
Joy of Living		120.00
Living Sober		385.00
New Attitudes		105.89
Ocala Group		390.21
Ocala Men's	200.00	599.36
One Day at a Time		825.00
Primary Purpose	36.00	135.00
Serenity Group		46.80
Shores Of Sobriety	150.00	150.00
Sober Yankees		183.32
Stop Whining & Sober Up		333.00
Strength in Numbers		43.27
We Give Up	6.33	33.73
We Give Thanks	9.87	34.87
Weir Crazy	26.00	347.00
Young People's Group		295.00
District #17		848.89
Birthday Club		402.00
Individual Members	30.72	245.14

How Groups and Individuals Support the Work of AA

Below is the example of allocation of group contributions provided by AA World Services in the information pamphlet:*

"SELF-SUPPORT: WHERE MONEY & SPIRITUALITY MIX"

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

30% AA General Service Office P.O. Box 459 6035 E. Tudor St. New York, NY 10164

10% North Florida Area Conference P.O Box 360831

Melbourne, Fl 32936

10% District 17 P.O. Box 3081 Ocala, FL 34478

*AA General Service Conference approved literature

Help carry the message to women inside looking out.



Our *Big Book* reminds us to "ask that we be given strength and direction to do the right thing no matter what the personal consequences maybe." District 17 Corrections Committee needs women willing to chair, speak, and participate in AA meetings in local women's prison. Let's pull together and help these women who are on the "inside looking out." The Big Book says, "When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed."

Men Needed Too.

The corrections committee also seeks men for similar service in men's prisons. To learn more or volunteer, contact Sherry R. or Bob L. at Intergroup. (352)867-0660

Intergroup Insights

The Spring Picnic was a huge success bringing in \$1,326.01 We are extremely grateful for everyone that helped. Mother Nature wasn't very cooperative but St. Mark's UMC stepped up and provided us with their Fellowship Hall.

The Free to Be Group is hosting the first ever Sobriety Variety Showcase in May at Unity Place. There will be fun, food, and fellowship as we have never seen before. If you would like to participate as a volunteer, vendor, actor, musician, or comedian contact Richard P. through Intergroup. The dunk tank is a perfect way to let go of that resentment you've been nursing.

There is an opening for Member at Large on the Steering Committee. Come to the monthly meeting to get involved. It's the second Sunday of every month at 4:30pm and held at the Intergroup Office. Don't forget to send your Intergroup Representative. It's very important that your group's voice be heard. All are welcome to attend the meeting. In grateful service,

Connie C.—Office Manager

District 17 Corner

The General Service Conference meets annually in April. At this time the 93 area Delegates from the U.S. and Canada meet to discuss issues relevant to you and me and groups across the country and Canada.

Several representatives from District 17 (Thom F., Ginger H., Connie C., Toni Marie C., Rick F. and Carson F.) travelled to Holder for a workshop presented by our Panel 63 Delegate, Marilyn B. She did a "bullet point" presentation on issues that the Area will be voting on at the upcoming NFAC in Lake Mary, Apr. 5-6.

Changes that we are going to vote on are too numerous for this article. Some of them are changes to a section in the pamphlet "Referrals from Court and Treatment Facilities" and "AA as a Resource for Health Care Professional." Consider development of a new video to replace "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell." Consider four (4) topics for the Grapevine for 2015.

Many of the changes to be reviewed and/or considered are about a change in wording to our existing literature. All of the topics to be voted on will be reviewed with background information so that your representatives can make an informed decision on each item.

After the conference, a summary of the issues and voting outcome will be forwarded to the GSRs to be presented at your Group Conscience meetings.

I want to extend a special thank you to all of the above listed individuals who took time to attend the workshop. There was great information presented. Those of us attending NFAC will be better prepared to vote.

Carson F. District 17 DCM

April In AA's History

April 1, 1939 - Publication date of Alcoholics Anonymous, AA's Big Book.

1940 - Larry J. of Houston, wrote "The Texas Prayer", used to open AA meetings in Texas. 1966 - Sister Ignatia

April 2,1966 - Harry Tiebout, M.D. died.

April 3, 1941 - First AA meeting held in Florida.

1960 - Fr. Ed Dowling, S.J., died. He was Bill W's "spiritual sponsor."

April 7, 1941 - Ruth Hock reported there were 1,500 letters asking for help as a result of the Saturday Evening Post Article by Jack Alexander.

April 10, 1939 - The first ten copies of the Big Book arrived at the office Bill and Hank P shared.

April 11, 1938 - The Alcoholic Foundation formed as a trusteeship for A.A.

1941 - Bill and Lois finally found a home, Stepping Stones in New Bedford.

April 16, 1940 - A sober Rollie H. catches the only opening day no-hitter in baseball history since 1909. 1973 -Dr. Jack Norris presented President Nixon with the one millionth copy of the Big Book.

April 19, 1940 - The first AA group in Little Rock, Arkansas, was formed. First 'mail order' group. 1941 - The first AA group in the State of Washington was formed in Seattle.

April 22, 1940 - Bill and Hank transfer their Works Publishing stock to the Alcoholic Foundation.

April 23, 1940 - Dr. Bob wrote the Trustees to refuse Big Book royalties, but Bill Winsisted that Dr. Bob and Anne receive them.

April 24, 1940 - The first AA pamphlet, "AA", was published. 1989 - Dr. Leonard Strong died.

April 25, 1939 - Morgan R interviewed on Gabriel Heatter radio show. 1951 - AA's first General Service Con-

April 26 or May 1, 1939 - Bank forecloses on 182 Clinton Street.

April 30, 1989 - Film "My Name is Bill W." a Hallmark presentation was broadcast on ABC TV.

April events with unspecific dates

1935 - Dr. Silkworth told Bill to quit preaching at drunks & tell them of obsession & allergy.

1950 - Saturday Evening Post article "The Drunkard's Best Friend" by Jack Alexander.

1958 - The word "honest" dropped from AA Preamble, "an honest desire to stop drinking".

1966 - Change in ratio of trustees of the General Service Board; now two thirds (majority) are alcoholic.

1970 - GSO moved to 468 Park Ave. South, NYC



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AA conference

approved literature **Bookstore Hours** Mon.-Fri., 10 to 5 and other recovery

related items including a variety of medallions, book

covers, cards, pins, bookmarks and gift

Saturday, 10 to 2

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The Voice by email for free. Send an e-mail with "Free Voice" in the subject line to: thevoice@aaocalamarion.org



The Voice by e-mail is sent anonymously in PDF format. No one else can see your email address. Requires Adobe Reader software. Print copies available at Intergroup office.

In Memoriam

We remember those whom we loved and cherished in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Bill K. and Dan W. of the Breaksfast Club Kenny R. of the Happy, Joyous, and Free Group

And Dustin of the Last Call Group