

Intergroup District 17, Inc.
3666A NE 25th Street
Ocala, FL 34470
352-867-0660
aaocalintegroup@gmail.com
Open: Mon.—Fri. 10am to 5pm
Saturday 10am to 2pm
Next IGR Meeting at Intergroup Office
Sunday, Feb. 9, 2013—4:30 pm
Steering Committee meeting follows

Intergroup District 17
Ocala, Marion County, Florida

The Hand of AA
24-Hour Hotline
365 Days a Year
352-867-0660

The Voice

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The hoop gets bigger

A beginner feels doomed by his lack of faith

In 1987, had told the head of the psychiatric ward at the naval hospital that they needed to get my boss help. I had made the mistake of telling them that I had briefly considered suicide in response to the pressures from my boss. They took away all my clothes, gave me a furry blue robe and a pair of one-size-fits-none slippers. After a week of interviews and testing, they told me I was depressed because I had been drinking large amounts of a depressant--alcohol. They explained that recovery from depression was slow and unremarkable, sometimes taking many years; but if I was possibly an alcoholic, recovery from depression would be rapid and easy. I told them that I thought I might be an alcoholic, because secretly I was looking for the easier, softer way. They asked me if I

would like to go to a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous next door in the Alcohol Rehabilitation Center (ARC). I gave them some feeble excuse why I could not go (like I had something better do while locked up in the mental ward?). The doctor looked at the nurse and said, "Denial." A week later, they transferred me to the ARC and forced me to go to an AA meeting.

I walked into the meeting room as nervous as an atheist at a gathering of holy rollers. The room was furnished with two brown, simulated-wood-grain tables, pushed together in the center of the room, surrounded by brown folding chairs. Around the outer walls were orange wire chairs with foam cushions.

On the center tables near the north wall, were pamphlets with titles like, "Are You an Alcoholic?" and "A Members View of AA," a basket and a *Continued page 2—>*

Tradition Two: When They Kept It Simple Serenity was restored

I belonged to an Eleventh Step group in a small village out in the country during my first year of sobriety. We met on Sunday mornings in the village grange, and the meeting was quite popular. We regularly drew about sixty people who came for our ten-minute meditation, followed by a speaker/discussion meeting. The village was small and parking was tight, especially during the summer when tourists came to visit the surrounding countryside.

Occasionally, the town's police officer would come in during the meeting to say we had to move such-and-such car away from a driveway, or that we were blocking some important access. The group realized that we had outgrown our space and discussions began on finding a larger space with better parking accommodations. This may sound like a simple proposition, but it became a volatile issue.

Many people loved the grange, and felt threatened by the prospect of moving. The meeting had been there for many years and some of us believed the spirituality of the meeting had infused the cinder block walls with a special feeling.

Our business meetings became difficult and more emotional as we discussed whether or not we should move. People interrupted one another to get their point across, and some ill will developed. I started to dread business meetings because I felt confused. The meeting itself could be so spiritual, nurturing, and loving, but the business meeting was governed more by insecurity, fear, and

hurt feelings.

Then a member of the group with more than ten years of sobriety suggested that we begin our business meetings by reading the Second Tradition: "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

The group chairperson followed the Second Tradition reading with a short statement that said, "We are holding this group conscience to discover our Higher Powers will about moving the meeting. We ask each member who participates in these discussions to do their best to leave their personal opinions out of their comments, to respect the comments of others, and to sincerely try to consider what's best for our group." This statement brought calm to our business meetings and returned civility and respect to our group conscience process.

Ultimately, the group conscience decided that we move the meeting to the local fire station where there was more parking and where our presence was less of a burden to the village. We got used to sitting among the fire trucks and now those walls, too, have been infused with the spirituality of our meditations, prayers, and discussions. I learned a valuable personal lesson during this process. The principles of our program can bring me back from my self-centered opinions to a sincere consideration of what is best for AA, and therefore what is best for me.

C.M.

blue book entitled *Alcoholics Anonymous*. The walls were decorated with cheap frames that held black and red calligraphy that said, "Easy Does It," "First Things First," "One Day at a Time" and "Think, Think, Think." On the wall at the head of the table were two window shades with The Twelve Steps and The Twelve Traditions printed on them.

I hid in the south corner of the room, sitting as far away as possible from those pamphlets, afraid that someone might ask me to talk. Shortly, more people arrived, laughing and joking, with big smiles. These people sat near the north end of the room. They were followed by others who looked remarkably like me--hopeless and lost. These people joined me in the back of the room. We shared the look of a person who knows that if he does not stop drinking, it will kill him, yet his body tells him he will die if he does stop drinking; a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.

The people with smiles read the Preamble, "How It Works," The Twelve Steps and The Twelve Traditions. I heard them use the "G" word (God) a couple of times, and wondered what kind of religious cult they were forcing on me. Would I be brainwashed? The more they talked, the more I could identify with what alcoholism had done to me. I was beginning to learn that alcoholism was a disease--like an allergy; just one drink would trigger the allergy, and at some point I would lose control and not be able to stop when I wanted to. That point would progressively draw nearer and nearer.

The solution was not to have that first drink. God, that was simple! Why didn't I think of that? But I had used alcohol for so long to escape from the realities and pain of life, I did not know how to deal with life's problems or joys without it.

As people continued to share, I began to feel hope, as if I'd been drowning and had been thrown a life preserver. Here they were in front of me, examples of recovery, full of joy and love. They had learned how to be happy in life without alcohol. Maybe I could be happy again. Maybe life could be worth living after all.

Then my life preserver lost its air. They relied on a "Higher Power." I felt as if I had seen heaven and then been told I could not go there. I left that meeting devastated, knowing all was lost. I did not have faith in God and I did not know how to pray. I thought I was doomed to an alcoholic death.

Fortunately, I was not allowed to crawl back into the bottle. They sent me back out to more meetings. I continued to learn that the hoop I needed to jump through for recovery was getting bigger and bigger.

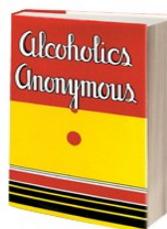
My first prayers were, "Please help" upon waking, and, "Thanks" when going to bed. I was afraid that God, when I found him, would abandon me and I would drink again. I learned that it was my "God as I understood him," that I could have any concept of God I wanted and that the program of recovery would still work. I decided that he could not abandon me, and I have not had that

fear of drinking since that time. The turning point in my recovery happened while I driving. It was a beautiful summer day and the temperature was around 70 degrees. I had the sunroof open and was powering through the corners with ease. The car was purring smoothly. The trees were in their summer's finest. I was listening to a tape that explained that faith in a Higher Power is not required to recover from alcoholism; only the belief and reliance on a Higher Power.

The second step in *Alcoholics Anonymous* is, "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." I then had faith that my Higher Power (whom I choose to call God) could and would relieve my alcoholism.

I understood how the program worked and knew that I would recover. The car then filled with a beautiful light. A warm feeling spread throughout my body, and tears of joy cascaded down my cheeks. I felt at peace with the world and one with my God.

Patrick H.



Announcing the 75th Anniversary edition of the Big Book

A.A. World Services, Inc. announces the publication of the first edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. This new edition will be a faithful replica of the original, with the famous "circus cover" dust jacket and bulky paper (which is why it was initially called the Big Book), and is published in the original English language text only.

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the historic publication of *Alcoholics Anonymous* in April 1939, the 2013 General Service Conference approved the creation of this facsimile edition of the first printing of the first edition.

Contact Intergroup at (352) 867-0060 or stop by to pre-pay for your copy now. A shipment of 45 have been pre-paid and will arrive in April. Cost is \$13.80 plus tax.

Intergroup Insights

- A desk volunteer needed for Tuesday, 10am to 2pm. One year of continuous sobriety is required.
- Sign up for the softball league! Call Intergroup for details.
- The Spring picnic planning needs to begin soon. We talked about changing the location and holding it in the month of March.
- Happy Hour group has changed the day they meet from Thursday to Wednesday.
- Eureka Group is beginning a Big Book study the 2nd Thursday in March.
- A new group has formed in Citra called the Program of Action 4D Group. They meet at 7:30pm on Wednesdays at the Phoenix House. Open Big Book format.

Congratulations February Birthdays!
 This issue we celebrate a collective 359 years
 more than 131,034 days of sobriety **One day at a time!**

Headstart
 John B. 4
Happy, Joyous & Free
 Camden A. 49
 Nancee B. 9
 Doug L. 9
 Theresa S. 6
 Sue Ellen N. 5
 Ronnie G. 3
 Matt T. 3
 JeniLou L. 3
 Chris B. 3
 Trina 2
 Steve S. 2
 Laurie J. 2
 Kevin W. 2
 Julie K. 2
 Carl H. 2
 Trista Z. 1

Living Sober
 Pete I. 42
 Greg T. 33
 Diane B. 26
 Andy K. 8
 Pam B. 5
 Justin W. 3
 Lourie J. 2
New Attitudes
 Jeff D. 8
 Terry B. 6
One Day at a Time
 Frank S. 5
 Ken 2
 Michelle T. 4
 Rick 1

Primary Purpose
 Joe S. 37
 Don C. 33
 Jim G. 23
Shores of Sobriety
 Allen O'S. 20

January
 Tony C. 8
 Paula R. 13
 Regina 13

Deadline for submitting birth-days is the 20th of the preceding month. Call 352.867.0660 or Email:thevoice@aocalamarion.org

~In Memoriam~

The A.A. fellowship of District 17, Marion County grieves the loss of four members. They helped so many of us in their journey of sobriety.

Our hearts and prayers go out to their families and friends.

Don C. of the Headstart Group
 Sept. 21013

Jack M. of the Eye Opener Group
 Dec. 2013

Cortez M. of the Fort McCoy and Fountain of Gratitude Groups

Cindy L. of the Ocala Group
 Jan. 2014

Mark Your Calendar

- **13th Annual Central FL Men's Workshop, Feb. 7-9** Life Enrichment Center 4991 Picciola Rd., Fruitland Park, FL 34731 <http://www.cflmw.org>
- **A Day of Reflection sponsored by the Stop Whining and Sober Up Group Feb. 12, 9:30am—3:00pm**
 Queen of Peace Parish Hall 6455 S.W. St. Rd. 200 \$7 Donation includes, lunch, coffee, and soda Contact Intergroup to reserve a space
- **Nature Coast Intergroup presents A Valentine's Day Dance, Feb. 14—8pm to Midnight**
 Town Hall, 135 Hwy. 40 W., Inglis, FL 34449 Music, Dancing, Refreshments—\$5 person Bring your favorite dessert
- **1st Annual Florida AA Archives Workshop cosponsored by Area 14 and 15 Feb 14, 7pm Kick-off Meeting Feb. 15—8:45am—5:30pm**
 Redeemer Lutheran, 3377 Aloma Ave, Winter Park, FL 32792 Registration is FREE. Contact archives@area15aa.org or archives@aanorthflorida.org to sign up
- **29th Annual Conference of Women in Recovery on the Gulf, Feb. 20—23**
 Paradise Palms Hotel 12907 Front Beach Rd., Panama City Bch., FL 32407 <http://www.womeninrecoveryonthegulf.com/>
- **General Service District 7 Annual Spaghetti Dinner , Feb. 22**
 Tavares Civic Center 100 E. Caroline St. Tavares, FL 32778, Tickets are \$5.00 Doors open at 5pm Contact: Jim S. at gratefullydone@aol.com
- **29th Annual Suwannee Big Boo Weekend, Mar. 7-8** The Conference and Retreat Center, Dowling Park, FL, Contact: David H. at suwaneebigbook@yahoo.com
- **3rd Annual Central Florida Women's Workshop, Mar. 14-16** Life Enrichment Center, 4991 Picciola Rd., Fruitland Park, FL 34731 <http://www.cfwomensworkshop.com/>

- **SOBERSTOCK 2014, Mar. 14-16**
 Camp Brorein, 16901 Boy Scout Rd., Odessa, FL 33556 Live music, camping, speakers, fun <http://www.soberstock.com/>
- **Annual Housecleaning Spiritual Retreat for A.A. & Al-Anon, Mar. 21-23**
 Lake Yale Conference Center, FL <http://www.retreatforaa-alanon.com/>
- **19th Annual Country Round-Up "Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of Life" Apr. 25-27** Ag Center, 1424 Jackson Ave. (Hwy 90) Chipley, FL 32428
 Contact: chipleycountryroundup@hotmail.com
- **24th Spring Conference—The Woodstock of A.A. May 2-4** -Holiday Inn-Orlando International Airport 5750 T.G. Lee Blvd., Orlando, FL 32822 (407) 851-6400
 Contact: gydell@cfl.rr.com
 Celebrating the day Bill W. and Dr. Bob first met Proceeds go to the maintenance and support of Dr. Bob's Home, Inc.
- **4th Annual Sunshine Convention "Three Pertinent ideas a. b. c.", May 16-18**
 Community Center, 1446 Commerce Dr., Crestview, FL 32536 <http://www.sunshineconvention.org/>

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 32936-0831
 - 10% District 17**
 P.O. Box 3081
 Ocala, FL 34478

Group Contributions to Intergroup

Fiscal year: June 1, 2013—May 31, 2014

GROUP NAME	Dec. '13	YTD
164 Pages		90.76
All You Need		92.31
Anonymity		1.15
Bellevue God's Way		100.00
Blichton Station		60.00
Breakfast Club	250.00	1391.55
Cabin in the Woods		150.63
Eureka Group	10.00	50.00
Forest Men's Group		40.00
Fort McCoy Group	10.00	85.78
Fountain of Gratitude		30.00
Free To Be		205.00
Grateful Gals		15.50
Grupo Mano Abierta		20.00
Happy Hour		50.00
Happy, Joyous & Free	384.40	2175.36
Headstart	85.59	507.23
The Healing Group		130.00
Heavy Hitters Men	20.00	110.00
Joy of Living		120.00
Living Sober		235.00
New Attitudes		63.24
Ocala Group		298.10
Ocala Men's		399.36
One Day at a Time	50.00	550.00
Primary Purpose		99.00
Serenity Group		46.80
Sober Yankees		75.87
Stop Whining & Sober Up		333.00
Strength in Numbers		43.27
We Give Up	13.40	27.40
We Give Thanks		25.00
Weir Crazy		301.00
Young People's Group		295.00
District #17	600.00	844.22
Birthday Club	200.00	402.00
Individual Members	33.91	183.31
Total	1657.30	9646.84

AA History in February

Feb. 1, 1918 - Original date set for Bill W.'s marriage to Lois Burnham. The date was moved up because of the war.

Feb. 2, 1942 - Bill W. paid tribute to Ruth Hock, AA's first paid secretary, who resigned to get married. She had written approximately 15,000 letters to people asking for help.

Feb. 5, 1941 - Pittsburgh Telegram ran a story on the first A.A. group's Friday night meeting of a dozen "former hopeless drunks."

Feb. 8, 1940 - Bill W., Dr. Bob, and six other A.A.s asked 60 rich friends of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. for money at the Union Club, N.Y. They got \$2,000. 1940 - Houston Press ran first of 6 anonymous articles on A.A. by Larry J.

Feb. 9, 2002 - Sue Smith Windows, Dr. Bob's daughter died.

Feb. 10, 1922: Harold E. Hughes was born on a farm near Ida Grove, Iowa. After his recovery from alcoholism, he became Governor of Iowa, a United States Senator, and the leading dark horse for the Presidential Democratic nomination in 1972, until he announced he would not run. He authored the legislation which created the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and other legislation to help alcoholics and addicts.

Feb. 11, 1938 - Clarence S. ("Home Brewmeister" in 1st, 2nd & 3rd editions) had his last drink.

Feb. 12, 1945 - World War II paper shortage forced reduction in size of the Big Book.

Feb. 13, 1937 - Oxford Groups "Alcoholic Squadron" met at the home of Hank P. ("The Unbeliever" in the 1st edition of the Big Book) in New Jersey. 1940 - With about two years of sobriety, Jim B. ("The Vicious Cycle") moved to the Philadelphia area and started the first Philadelphia A.A. group.

Feb. 14, 1971 - AA groups worldwide held a memorial service for Bill Wilson. 2000 - William Y., "California Bill" died in Winston Salem, NC.

Feb. 15, 1946 - AA Tribune, Des Moines, IA, reported 36 new members since Marty M. had been there.

Feb. 16, 1941 - Baltimore Sunday Sun reported city's first AA group begun in 1940 had grown from 3 to 40 members, with five being women.

Feb. 18, 1943 - AA's were granted the right to use cars for 12th step work in emergency cases, despite gas rationing.

Feb. 19, 1967 - Father "John Doe" (Ralph P.), 1st Catholic Priest in AA, died.

Feb. 20, 1941 - The Toledo Blade published first of three articles on AA by Seymour Rothman.

Feb. 21, 1939 - 400 copies of the Big Book manuscript were sent to doctors, judges, psychiatrists, and others for comment. This was the "multilith" Big Book.

Feb. 22, 1842 - Abe Lincoln addressed the Washington Temperance Society in Springfield, IL.

Feb. 24, 2002 -- Hal M., "Dr. Attitude of Grati-

tude," died. He had 37 years of sobriety. Hal testified, anonymously, before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse on December 3, 1970.

Feb. 26, 1999 - Felicia G., author of "Stars Don't Fall," died. Born Countess Felicia G. in 1905, she was the daughter of Count Josef G. and Eleanor Medill Patterson. She married Drew Pearson in 1925 and divorced him three years later. She married Dudley de Lavigne in 1934, but the marriage lasted less than a year. In 1958 she married John Kennedy Magruder and divorced him in 1964. For most of her professional career, she went by the name Felicia G.

Other Feb. happenings with no specific date:

1908 - Bill W. made boomerang.

1916 - Bill W. & sophomore class at Norwich University was suspended for hazing.

1938 - Rockefeller gave \$5,000 to AA.

1939 - Dr. Harry Tiebout endorsed AA, the first psychiatrist to do so.

1940 - First organization meeting of Philadelphia AA is held at McCready H.'s room at 2209 Delaney St.

1940 - 1st AA clubhouse opened at 334-1/2 West 24th Street, NYC.

1943 - San Francisco Bulletin reporter Marsh Masline interviewed Ricardo, a San Quentin Prison AA group member.

1946 - Baton Rouge, La., AA's hold their first anniversary meeting.

1946 - The AA Grapevine reported the New York Seaman's Group issued a pamphlet for seamen "on one page the 12 Steps have been streamlined into 5."

1946 - Des Moines Committee for Education on Alcoholism aired its first show on KRNT.

1946 - Pueblo, Colorado, had a second group, composed of alcoholic State Hospital patients.

1951 - Fortune magazine article about AA was published in pamphlet form.

1959 - AA granted "Recording for the Blind" permission to tape the Big Book.

1963 - Harpers carried article critical of AA.

1981 - 1st issue of "Markings," AA Archives Newsletter, was published, "to give the Fellowship a sense of its own past and the opportunity to study it."

District Corner**From the District 17 DCM**

Area Assembly was January 17 – 19, 2014. District 17 was represented by the DCM, three (3) GSRs and one (1) Alt. GSR. Much appreciation goes to Brian B, Frank B, Craig C and Rick F for their attendance. District 17 has 55 groups. Being represented at Area by four (4) groups does not speak well for our involvement in Area Assembly. For me it is a great time to learn about the various service opportunities and what other Districts are doing.

Saturday night Ward Ewing was our speaker at the 8:00 PM meeting. Ward is a Class "A" Trustee Emeritus (retired). That means he is a non-alcoholic. He is a powerful voice for AA. While we as individuals are anonymous, Ward can be our voice. Ward has been involved with AA for over 30 years. He is a retired Episcopal priest and began working with an alcoholic in his congregation. Since that time he has worked the steps and lived the principals of AA. Even though he is non-alcoholic, it was obvious the people in attendance related to his story.

In addition to attending the speaker meeting, I was at the mini-D, Service Manual and Traditions workshops. The Traditions workshop was on 7 & 8 and presented in Spanish. This was a change from the usual English format. There were several of us "English" speaking people in attendance. It was a great time as we listened to the translation to English. There was much sharing in both languages with suggestions from both sides. I would encourage everyone to give it a try. It certainly gave me a new perspective of being the *minority* language.

Marilyn B and Glenn W, our Area Delegate & Alt. Delegate will be presenting pre-conference (GSC) workshops in the Districts. District 17 will be meeting with District 24 in Holder. These workshops will be about all of the issues and topics to be handled at the General Service Conference in April when all of the Area Delegates from the US & Canada meet. This is the time when the upside down triangle is truly at work. All decisions are made for the good of the individual & groups. More will follow as the information comes available.

Carson F.—District 17 DCM

The Voice by email for free.

Send an e-mail with "Free Voice"
in the subject line to:



thevoice@aaocalamarion.org