



The Voice

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Monthly Newsletter of Marion County Intergroup Office

JANUARY 2024

JANUARY 2024 | EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY | STEP ONE

BY: JERI W. | YUKON, OKLAHOMA

Step One "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable."

No one likes to admit they have a problem. It took me years before I realized that I might have one with alcohol. It's funny looking back now because I can see so obviously all the consequences and issues that arose as a result of my drinking. All the hangovers, the unsafe situations I put myself into, the unhealthy relationships I stayed in, the fights I had, the excuses I made, the remorse I felt, the money I spent, and the mirrors I couldn't look into.

There were so many signs that I had a problem, but I just couldn't see them. Besides, I hung out with people who drank like I did, and I dated guys who seemed to have a problem with alcohol, their consequences overshadowing my issues. So in my mind, I was just the same as everyone else. Besides, I owned a home and a car, and I had my career. I certainly couldn't have a drinking problem, could I?

In March of 2008 though, after getting a DUI, I decided to give up drinking for a while to "take a break." It was harder than I thought. I had been in Al-Anon for several years but decided to attend some open AA meetings. I didn't think I was an alcoholic. I just

knew I didn't want to drink. Thank God for the people in those meetings who encouraged me to try to do some controlled drinking and see how I felt. Well, here's how it went...

NIGHT ONE

In April 2008, I had a work trip to Chicago. The first night, a Friday, I went to dinner at a nice steak house and ordered a glass of white wine to go with my dinner. I decided that I would only drink half of the glass to show my control and prove I wasn't an alcoholic. Quickly though, I realized as I was sipping that I had absolutely no idea where half was. I began an internal debate. If I had another sip, would that still be half? And what about one more sip? And just one more.

It sounds ridiculous to even say it out loud, but that was pure agony. I had to show my control, but I wanted to be able to drink as much as possible. It was quite the conundrum. And all the while, the person I was having dinner with had absolutely zero idea about the turmoil that was happening within me. There was literally a war raging inside my head.

I finally settled on where half a glass of wine was, leaving some wine in the
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Important Dates

- **January 14th**
Intergroup/Central Office
Representative meet
Lost & Found
616 S. Pine Ave
- **January 25th**
District 17 monthly meeting, 7:00pm
Unity Place,
525 NE Sanchez

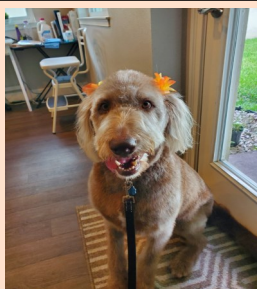
Every Thursday Area 14
Service Workshop, 6pm
Hospitality, 5:45pm
New Topic every Thursday
Zoom Meeting ID:
828 5682 4762; pw: service

FAITHFUL FIVERS
Contribute \$5/month
or \$60/year

Contributors:
Joe S, Phil H, Ralph W

Your membership directly supports 12-Step work in District 17 Central Office Operation

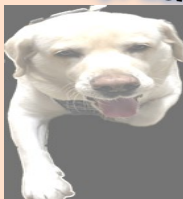
Intergroup's 4-legged Visitors are always welcome



Sheba



Bandit



Pawnee



Trudy



continued from page 1

glass as we finished dinner and left the restaurant. It was hard, but I did it.

NIGHT TWO

We went out to dinner after work Saturday to a crowded restaurant. I was tired from two days of working a trade show, long days on my feet full of handshakes and conversations. Before we left the hotel, I had made up my mind that I was going to only have two beers at dinner.

By the time we had decided on a restaurant and elbowed our way through the crowded bar area to a table that was too small for our group of four, it was apparent to me that this whole idea of controlled drinking sucked, and I hated everyone and just wanted to get good and drunk. But no, I wouldn't do that. I had said two beers so that's what I would have.

I can't remember what I ordered but I recall they were ice cold and sweat dripped down the bottles and I enjoyed every last drop. When the AA members told me about controlled drinking, they said to stop abruptly while drinking and see how I felt. Well, I can tell you that the moment I finished up my second beer, I was so mad. Not just a little angry—livid. All I wanted was another beer. Two was definitely not enough.

I didn't have another one though. I had said two so that's where it ended. It's funny looking back now because I don't even think I put it together that there was a correlation between my anger and controlling my drinking. At the time, I blamed my feelings on being tired, the crowded restaurant, the unfulfilling company. But it was definitely because I couldn't drink as much as I wanted.

NIGHT THREE

Sunday was the final day of work in Chicago, and I was exhausted. Between the long hours working and the emotions of not drinking—or, rather, not drinking the way I wanted to—all I wanted was an early night. What happened instead was the complete opposite.

MONDAY

The next morning, I woke up with what the Big Book calls the "Hideous Four Horseman—Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, Despair." I felt all those things. I had one of the worst hangovers I could remember, a married man in my bed and a feeling of complete and utter hopelessness.

For the first time in that entire weekend, I finally could see what those AA members had been talking about when they suggested I try controlled drinking. When I edition of the Big Book, "Crossing the River of Denial," where another member describes this exact same feeling.

It was an epiphany, albeit a painful one, and it was the beginning of the end of drinking for me. I had begun to take Step One without knowing it, but I wasn't ready to give up just yet. It would still be months before I put down drinking for good, attempting several more times to control my drinking to prove that I didn't have a problem. But each time, when I controlled my drinking, I was miserable.

It's been over 13 years now since I gave up alcohol and that weekend in Chicago was the beginning of the end of it all. I learned that there's no middle road for drinking for me. It's either all or nothing.

I have found a wonderful fellowship in AA. We support each other, encourage each other, and lift each other up as we go. My gratitude for the life I have today is indescribable. There's no way I would be alive today had I not quit drinking.

On paper, I certainly didn't look like an alcoholic. It wasn't until I tried to stop that I realized I had a problem and that my life was actually unmanageable.

If you think you might have a problem or you're just not sure, I encourage you to try some controlled drinking like I did. Try drinking and abruptly stop. See how you feel. Be honest with yourself. Only you can decide. And if you think it's time to stop, please know you don't have to do it alone.

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**Winner for December Intergroup Basket Raffle
~ David P.—Bellevue Eye Opener**



One member's voice

Shouting from the housetops

He couldn't wait to tell everyone about his AA membership!
Hmm...maybe not a great idea

TRADITION TWELVE: *"Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."*

There seems to be a certain progression that occurs in the life of any alcoholic who comes to AA to get sober, to stay sober and to stay close to the Fellowship and the program. Before many of us came into AA we didn't want anyone to know that we were alcoholic, and we did our darnedest to keep it under wraps.

When I finally crawled out from under the rock of alcohol and found my way into the Fellowship—the program that could help me get sober and maintain sobriety in the private and protected environment of the group—I wanted to tell everyone. After all, it was miraculous that AA had done what I could not do for myself or through any other means. As our "Twelve and Twelve" book states, we wanted to "shout AA from the housetops."

That may seem like a positive and worthwhile action to take, especially since there's such a great need to bring recovery to the alcoholic and, since AA has worked for me, why wouldn't it work for everyone else?

There are two major flaws in this line of thinking: 1) that I know what's best for others; and 2) that I will remain a positive example for others to follow in the future.

First, we learn in AA that this program works for the alcoholic who wants it and is willing to do the work involved in the recovery process. Not all alcoholics want it, and even if they do, they may not be on the specific timeline to recover that we in AA may think that they need. It takes some of us (including myself) some time to develop the desire to stop, build the trust that AA will really work and draw on a willingness to go through with the program.

Secondly, how do you know that you will stay sober in the future? Sobriety is out of your hands now and it's in the hands of the Fellowship, the

program, and essentially, God. And if I don't take care of my daily reprieve (to do what I need to do to stay connected to God) then I might not stay sober, and what kind of example would I then be setting for the newcomer?

The bottom line is that anonymity is not about me. It's about setting a course to ensure the survival of the Fellowship and setting the stage to bring the newcomer in, all while providing the safety and security that anonymity brings. In other words, principles before personalities.

I know that part of me wants credit for work done. I want recognition and prestige. And sometimes I feel the need to be noticed. But I'm not an evangelist or a reformer, or even an AA authority with titles to flaunt. I'm just someone with an opportunity to serve as I have been taught. As a result of service, I've been given more than I feel I deserve—sobriety and peace of mind.

BY: G.H. | KINGSTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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GRAPEVINE Daily Quote

January 1, 2024

"All I had to do was ask myself a simple question: 'Am I or am I not powerless over alcohol?' I didn't have to compare myself or my experience with anyone, just answer a simple question."

Miami, Fla., March 1962, "Slow Learner",
Step By Step



Living Sober presents
2nd Sunday Speaker Meeting
January 14th @ 6:30pm
Steve M - Speaker
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
5200 SW College Road (SR 200)

SAVE THE DATE

AA DISTRICT 17
SERVICE FAIR
February 17, 10 to 2

Discover Volunteer Opportunities
Lunch
Speakers - inc. Area Delegate
Drawings

DAV 9636 SE 58th Ave, Belleview
AADISTRICT17FL.ORG

Made with PosterMyWall.com



SAVE THE DATES

- **Nature Coast Women's Day**
April 20, 2024 10am—4pm /
Call Eleanor B 484-661-8753
(Flyer @ Intergroup Office)

- **SIS—23rd Spring Into Sobriety**
Women's Conference
May 3,4 & 5 2024



go to: [SIS Conference | 22nd Spring Into Sobriety Women's Conference](#)

- **Prodigal Sons V—Central Florida AA Men's**
12-Step Retreat—May 17 thru 19, 2024
Lake Yale Baptist Convention Center
39034 County Rd 452, Leesburg, FL 34788
Contact *prodicalsonsv@gmail.com*
or Call/Text Daniel @ 941-730-4274
(Flyers @ Intergroup Office)

AA Historical Events in January

1940 (January) – The first AA meeting not in a home begins at King School, Akron, OH
1943 (January) – Columbus Dispatch reports 1st Anniversary of Central Ohio AA group
1943 (January) – Canadian newspaper reports 8 men meet in at “Little Denmark”, a Toronto restaurant, to discuss starting Canada's first AA group



Birthdays

January

Bellevue Group	Living Sober
George B—2	Frank M—6
Heidi L—23	Chuck B—35
Bellevue Speaker	Judy L—42
Alonzo—17	On Awakening
Ralph W—47	Dan W—2
Breakfast Club	Beth M—2
Linda S—25	John C—40
Art O—40	We Give Up
Bill H—40	Lindy T—5
Joe S—47	

Contributions

December

Alive and Well	\$ 60.00
Anonymity	\$ 42.00
Bellevue Speaker	\$ 183.00
Cabin in the Woods	\$ 50.00
Headstart	\$ 215.15
Lunch Bunch	\$ 163.84
It's Not Them	\$ 30.00
Living Sober	\$ 359.00
New Attitudes	\$ 208.95
No Name	\$ 40.00
One Day At A Time	\$ 87.05
Shores of Sobriety	\$ 75.00
Sober Yankees	\$ 75.00

Congrats!!!



REMINDER - To have Group Member's Birthdays acknowledged in The Voice information needs to be forwarded to Intergroup/Central Office aaocalaintergroup@gmail.com for respective month, i.e. end of November for December Birthdays.

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 6301  
Jacksonville, FL 32205-9998  
*(Address changes every two years. Visit [www.aanorthflorida.org](http://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 3447**