

# The Voice

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January 2009



## In this issue

One member's voice.....	1
A new year's message.....	1
January Birthdays.....	2
January by the Books.....	2
Service opportunities.....	3
Intergroup 17 corner.....	4
How to contribute.....	5
Meetings/events.....	6
Notes & announcements....	7
Contact Intergroup.....	8

A HAPPY  
NEW YEAR

from  
Intergroup 17

## A quote for January

*"We neither ran  
nor fought.  
But accept we did.  
And then we began  
to be free."*

*As Bill Sees It, page 109*

## One member's voice

# The greatest gift I ever received.

## A story of experience, strength, and hope

*"We admitted we were powerless over alcohol---that our lives had become unmanageable."*

Christmas is over and the trash men have picked up the gift-wrappings, satin bows, and empty boxes that I ever so greedily tore through and then threw out. I thought of all the goodies I got from Santa because when he checked his list he found out that I was nice, not naughty. Then I asked myself, "What was the greatest gift I have ever received?"

That question brought me back to the last day I drank. Alcohol had given me a sleeping room with an old rickety bed, a dresser that had cigarette burns on top, and a small table that had a hotplate on it. The window shade was

torn in spots and stained from tar and nicotine. I shared a dirty bathroom down the hall with other drunks. Needless to say, the shower was seldom used.

My family didn't know where I was or if I were dead or alive. I was malnourished. I was dehydrated. I looked around at my surroundings and asked myself, "How did I get here in a black hole filled with loneliness, despair, and me?" I now know that alcoholism got me there, and alcoholism wanted me there alone, surrounded by squalor.

But at that moment in that room, all I could think was, "I'd be better off dead. My family would be better off if I were dead." So, my thoughts turned to suicide.

*Continued, page 4*

## A New Year's Message. It Works!

Reprinted by permission from *The Grapevine*, January 1949, sixty years ago.

Nothing is so brittle as a New Year's resolution, unless it be a glass crutch.

Most New Year's resolutions shatter within a few days. Then their broken pieces lie around, as sharp as needles, remindful of failure until the skin, or the conscience, has again become calloused. What, in fact, is so rare as an unbroken New Year's

resolution in June?

Yet, we in particular, were among the most prolific New Year's resolution makers. We turned them out on a mass production scale. All through the year we stored up our awareness of personal deficiencies and faults, planning to correct them all in one vast wash of resolutions. Do it all at once, we said, with splendid optimism. Easy does it, in reverse.

OF course, it probably is better to have one day or a few days of high resolution than none at all, but how

much more practical if the purpose behind the New Year's resolution is built into daily life. How much easier it is to correct the deficiencies and the faults one by one as we go along day by day, than to try to level a mountain in one stroke.

The kindness and the realism of the A.A. approach to the task of self-improvement offer more hope of success than the high resolution sworn to once a year. At least they have offered more hope and

*Continued page 3*

## Congratulations January Birthdays!



This issue we celebrate anniversaries of our local AA family members that add up to a collective 313 years. That's 114,245 days of sobriety One Day At A Time!

Barbara T	33 years	Karen H	7 years	Al C	9 years
Bud S	29 years	Richie M	5 years	Pamela P	8 years
Judy L	25 years	Phil H	2 years	Beth S	5 years
Buzz G	21 years	Ron C	2 years	Ron R	2 years
Wes H	19 years	Tom F	2 years	Bob R	1 year
John D	15 years	April F	1 year	Robert D	1 year
Hank N	14 years	John H	1 year		
Juan O or R?)	13 years				
Larry B	12 years	<b>December 2008 Birthdays</b>			
Diane M	9 years			Please share your AA birthday with all. Deadline for February birthdays is January 20. E-mail to ocalaintergroup@msn.com or telephone 352-867-0660.	
Heidi L	8 years	Joe S	23 years		
Guido	7 years	Roger Dem	21 years		
Jerry	7 years	Eddie R	11 years		

## January by the Books

### STEP ONE

**We admitted we were powerless over alcohol --  
That our lives had become unmanageable.**

“Alcohol, now become the rapacious creditor, bleeds us of all self sufficiency and all will to resist its demands. Once this stark fact is accepted, our bankruptcy as going human concerns is complete.”

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, page 21*

“Only Step One, where we made the 100 percent admission we were powerless over alcohol, can be practiced with absolute perfection.”

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, page 68*

“Long before I was able to obtain sobriety in A.A., I knew without a doubt that alcohol was killing me, yet even with this knowledge, I was unable to stop drinking. So, when faced with Step One, I found it easy to admit that I lacked the power not to drink. But my life was unmanageable? Never! Five months after coming into A.A., I was drinking again and wondering why.

Later on, back in A.A. and smarting from my wounds, I learned that Step One is the only Step that can be taken 100%. And that the only way to take it 100% is to take 100% of the Step. That was many twenty-four hours ago and I haven't had to take Step One again.”

*Daily Reflections, page 19*

### TRADITION ONE

**“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.”**

“The unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most cherished quality our Society has. Our lives, the lives of all to come, depend squarely upon it. We stay whole, or A.A. dies. Without unity, the heart of A.A. would cease to beat; our world arteries would no longer carry the life-giving grace of God; His gift to us would be spent aimlessly.”

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, page 129*



### CONCEPT ONE

**“The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship”**

*Twelve Concepts for World Service, page 6*

## Join the Birthday Club

Celebrate an AA anniversary—yours or another member's—with a contribution to help Intergroup 17 carry the message to other alcoholics in Ocala and Marion County. To join, send name, sobriety date,

years of sobriety, and a donation—suggested is \$1 for each year of sobriety.

Make checks payable to and send with celebrant's information to:

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



## Service opportunities.

### Hotline and 12-Step Call volunteers needed!

Intergroup has a critical need for volunteers to help staff our 24-Hour Hotline after business hours from their own homes and to help respond to 12-Step calls. One year of sobriety required. Call

Intergroup 17 to volunteer: 352-867-0660.

### Help take meetings to Local Correctional Institutions.

Volunteers are needed to help take AA meetings to local correctional institutions on Monday and Wednesday evenings. Applications available at Intergroup 17 office. More info, please contact Paul N. at 352-622-6967 or John at 352-598-4319.

### You've got a Friend in the Hospital.

Eddie F. is organizing meetings for hospital-bound members of our fellowship and asks for your help in carrying the message. Cell phone: 352-207-5144. Office: 352-237-8800. E-mail:

[eddie@ferrentinoandson.com](mailto:eddie@ferrentinoandson.com)

### Publicize your service opportunities here.

Send to: [ocalainter-group@msn.com](mailto:ocalainter-group@msn.com)  
or call 352-867-0660.



## N MEMORIAM RO FAWCETT

Ro Fawcett, a long-time member of our fellowship passed away November 29, 2008 in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Many in the Ocala area remember Ro as a member of the Happy, Joyous, and Free group and the Saturday morning women's meeting. Her sobriety date was July 1983 She will be missed by all who knew and loved her.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, January 17, 2009 at 4:00pm at St. Mark's Methodist Church followed by refreshments in the Church Hall.

## A New Year's Message. It Works!

Continued from page 1

yielded more success for many.

There are, to be sure, other ways, and, of course, some New Year's resolutions do endure. But the inventory that is taken more often than annually and the resolution that is formed at the beginning and the close of each 24 hours have worked convincingly for many and will continue to work for many more.

The new hope that comes from this overwhelming evidence of a new approach to an old and deadly trouble is the offer of the New Year, of each New Year. "It works!" is the electrifying promise that we can give to others.

If there has to be a resolution today, let it be that we will offer those two words fraught with the ringing message that has been proven over and over. "It works!" They offer a new year to any who are still burdened with the past. They bring a new year whenever and wherever they are accepted. Today is the day, any day and every day, to try the new way. Today, "It works!" Tomorrow, "It works!"

Through the 13 years\* of A.A., people have been doubting those words at first, testing them skeptically, and finally coming to believe them. Perhaps the message they speak makes the best resolution of all.

THE A.A. who knows that "it works" needs no ceremony to remind him. His day of high resolution came the moment he took the 1st Step. His New Year began then and continues as long as he follows the new way that others have blazed. His New Year's resolutions are forged and strengthened day by day. Where the glass crutch was brittle and shattered easily, he now has at hand a staff stronger than steel. He has faith built upon proof that, "It works."

\*This article was originally published in 1949, sixty years ago.

## District 17 Service can start here.

Don't wait to be asked. District 17 has opportunities for service in areas as diverse as corrections and treatment facilities to public information and accessibility. Come to the next District 17 meeting to learn more. Thursday, January 29, 2009, 6:00 pm, St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 1839 N.E. 8th Avenue, Ocala, FL.

### GSRs. Remember to attend Area Assembly

North Florida Area Assembly is scheduled for January 9-11 in Gainesville. See accompanying box for highlights. All AA members welcome. Complete meeting information and an agenda available at: [www.aanorthflorida.org](http://www.aanorthflorida.org).

## North Florida Area Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous Area Assembly

January 9-11, 2009. Paramount Resort and Conference Center  
2900 SW 13th St Gainesville, FL

### Friday, January 9

6 to 8 pm Registration  
8 to 9 pm Discussion meeting

### Saturday,

7 to 8 am Poolside discussion meeting  
9 am to 6 pm New GSR and DCM orientations, workshops, officer meetings, and much more.  
6 to 9:30 pm Dinner and speaker meeting  
10 to 11 pm Ice cream social. Discussion meeting

### Sunday, January 11

7 to 8 am Poolside discussion meeting  
9 am to Noon Business meeting

### Please note:

- All members of AA are invited to attend all functions.
- Only voting DCMs & GSRs or their alternates in their absence may vote at the business meeting on Sunday. Participants must be seated by 9:00 am Sunday in order to vote.
- Grapevine store is open on Saturday in the Grapevine Room adjacent to registration desk.
- The ice cream social cost is \$5. It has been known to ruin a diet but warm a heart.

Find complete meeting information and full agenda at [www.aanorthflorida.org](http://www.aanorthflorida.org)

## The Greatest Gift

continued from page 1

How could I do it? I could borrow a gun. Jump from a tall building. Overdose. I'm sure that alcohol was pleased with these thoughts because I now know that its ultimate goal is to kill me.

Suddenly, into that black hole of hopelessness and despair, where I felt as if I stood at the gates of Hell, came the greatest gift I have ever received—the God-given instinct of survival. I thought, "I don't want to die. I want to live." That thought came from God.

I left that sleeping room, went to detox, then to rehab where they taught recovery from a book called Alcoholics Anonymous.

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

I learned that every time I got in the ring with King Alcohol that I lost all self-respect and morality, and gained, as the Big Book says, in "pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization."

I learned that with the first drink comes the phenomenon of

craving, after that I can't stop drinking, and that there were times I had to drink just to stop "the shakes." I learned that I have the disease of alcoholism.

Alcoholism is the great conqueror. In order to surrender, I had to cease fighting and go over to the winning side. I had to admit complete defeat.

The unmanageability? Besides my living conditions in a tenement of sleeping rooms for drunks and addicts, alcohol had alienated me from anything that was good and healthy. It had alienated me from God, my family, even from basic communication with human beings, for there were days when the only person I talked to was the man at the liquor store.

Before I found Alcoholics Anonymous, alcohol was the only thing that mattered to me. It was my escape from reality. The day that God brought me back from the gates of Hell marked my beginning. So, I did not balk at Step One.

Since then more gifts have been bestowed on me: health, my family's love and encouragement, and the fellowship of AA where people are genuinely concerned about

my well-being.

I've been given the gift of learning a new way of life. And I found a God who knows me and loves me anyway. I believe that the instinct to live was a gift from God because He wants me to be of maximum service to Him and my fellows.

I am now on the winning side. I'm so grateful for the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous and hope those who read this will understand that God is doing for me what I can't do for myself. God is Good.

*Joan H, Ocala, Florida  
January 2009*



The thoughts, expressions, and opinions expressed here are those of the author and not necessarily those of Alcoholics Anonymous or Intergroup 17. Ocala-Marion County, Florida.

### How Groups and Individuals Support the Work of AA

Group contributions are the major funding source for the work of Intergroup 17 and other areas of AA. Many groups follow the 50-30-10-10 plan of support after they meet their own financial needs:

- 50 percent to Intergroup 17
- 30 percent to AA Worldwide General Services Office
- 10 percent to North Florida Area Assembly
- 10 percent to District 17

### Send group contributions to:

Intergroup 17  
P.O. Box 1192  
Ocala, FL 34478

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

NFACAA  
Marilyn Balliet  
Inverness, FL 34452

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

Some individual members choose to provide financial support to Intergroup 17 in various ways.

- *Faithful Fivers*: \$5 each month
- *Double Nickel*: \$10 each month
- *Birthday Club Members*: \$1 or more per year of sobriety on their AA "birthday"

All contributions large and small make a difference. Send to:

Intergroup 17  
P.O. Box 1192  
Ocala, FL 34478

**THANKS!**

*I am responsible. Whenever anyone anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA to be there. For that I am responsible.*

### Ocala-Marion Country Group Contributions to Intergroup 17—from June 2009

Group	Fiscal YTD	Group	Fiscal YTD	Group	Fiscal YTD
2nd Step Group		Grace Group		Open Door Group	
11th Step Group		Grateful Gals	\$ 84.00	Primary Purpose	\$ 42.00
17th Street Group		Happy Highlanders - Dunnellon		Shores of Sobriety	\$ 70.00
164 Pages Group		Happy Hour Group		Sisters of Serenity - Ocklawaha	
ACOA		Happy, Joyous & Free	\$ 33.01	Start A New Life	\$ 11.55
ALANON	\$ 60.00	Headstart Group	\$ 280.79	Steps and Promises	
Acceptance		It's In The Book		Stop Whining and Sober Up	\$ 50.00
Alive and Well		Keep It Simple	\$ 200.00	Strength In Numbers - Belleview	
Anonymity Group		Last Call Group		Summerfield Group	
As Bill Sees It - The Villages	\$ 220.25	Last House On The Block		Sundae Social Group	\$ 100.00
Belleview Eye Opener Group	\$ 50.00	Life Is Good Sober - The Refuge		TLC Group - the Centers	
Belleview Group	\$ 140.00	Living Sober	\$ 224.19	TenBroeck Group	
Bonfire Group - The Refuge		Lunch Bunch	\$ 75.50	Unity Group	
Breakfast Club	\$ 1,275.00	Mano Abierta		We Give Thanks	\$ 65.00
Came To Believe		Marion Oaks Group		We Give Up	\$ 79.00
Citra Group	\$ 25.00	McIntosh Group		Weir Crazy - Summerfield	\$ 175.00
Come As You Are		New Attitudes	\$ 142.33	Young People's Group - YPG	
Conscious Contact		No Name Group	\$ 30.00	<b>DOUBLE NICKELS</b>	
Experience, Strength & Hope		Nueva Vida		<b>FAITHFUL FIVERS</b>	\$ 5.00
Forest Group	\$ 160.00	Ocala AM Men's Group	\$ 163.50	<b>INDIVIDUALS</b>	\$ 33.85
Ft. McCoy Group	\$ 30.00	Ocala Group	\$ 1301.61	<b>BIRTHDAY CLUB</b>	\$ 21.00
Fountain of Gratitude - Salt Springs	\$ 50.00	Ocklawaha AM Group			
Free To Be		One Page At A Time			
God's Way Group	\$ 2.00				



# Local Events and Meetings of Interest

## Ocala/Marion County

For a complete listing of the more than 120 meetings of AA per week in Ocala/Marion county visit:  
[www.aaocalamarion.org](http://www.aaocalamarion.org)

### Monday

#### **Beginners Meeting**

##### **17th Street Group**

6:00pm every Monday  
Church of Christ

2730 SE Maricamp Rd., Ocala

### Wednesday

#### **Meditation**

##### **Conscious Contact**

7:00pm every Wednesday

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

3452 NE Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala

#### **Spanish Speaking**

##### **Grupo Nueva Vida**

7:00pm every Wednesday

150-A SW 23rd Ave. (1/2 block

South of Ft. King), Ocala

### Thursday

#### **Eat 'n Speak**

##### **Keep It Simple Group**

Last Thursday of the month

Eat: 7:00pm Speaker: 8:00pm

Small fee for meal

ALL INVITED!

Ascension Lutheran Church

5730 SE 28th Street, Ocala

#### **District 17 Monthly Meeting**

6:00 pm last Thursday of the month

All GSRs. Everyone welcome.

St. Mark's United Methodist

1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

### Friday

#### **Speaker Meeting**

##### **Experience, Strength and Hope**

8:00pm every Friday

Druid Hills Methodist Church

1712 SE Lake Weir Blvd., Ocala

#### **Spanish Speaking**

##### **Grupo Mano Abierta**

7:00pm every Friday

2082 Walnut St., Dunnellon, FL

### Saturday

#### **Eat 'n Speak**

##### **Ocala Group**

Last Saturday of the month

Eat: 7:00pm Speaker: 8:00pm

Small fee for meal

EVERYONE INVITED!

St. Mark's United Methodist

1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

#### **Spanish Speaking**

##### **Grupo Mano Abierta**

7:00pm every Saturday

2082 Walnut St., Dunnellon, FL

### Sunday

#### **Intergroup 17 Monthly**

5:15 pm second Sunday of month

Intergroup reps. Everyone welcome.

St. Mark's United Methodist

1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

2082 Walnut St., Dunnellon, FL

## New Meetings

#### **"No Name Yet" Group**

Open meeting, 7:30pm

Every Friday

9200 Sunset Harbor Road

Summerfield, FL

Info: Mike G. 352-245-3272

#### **Lifesaver Group**

##### **Starting January**

Open meeting, 12:00 noon

Monday through Saturday

Recovery Road at CornerStone Ctr.

6789 SW Highway 200

Ocala

#### **Ocala Group**

Open meeting, 5:30pm

Monday through Saturday

St. Mark's United Methodist

1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

#### **Happy, Joyous and Free**

Open meeting, 12:00 noon

Monday through Friday

St Matthews Lutheran Church

3452 NE Silver Springs Blvd.,

Ocala

#### **Special Invitation**

Please support our meeting.

#### **One Page at a Time Group**

##### **Big Book Study Meeting**

Sundays, 4:00 pm

Unity Place

525 NE Sanchez Ave

Ocala, FL



#### **Special Request The Belleview Group**



Help us find a new home.

The Belleview Group has been meeting at St Theresa's Church in Belleview for approximately 30 years and is now in need of a new meeting place.

Anyone who knows of a place where the group can meet on Monday and Friday evenings in the Belleview area, please contact Heidi L., Belleview Group GSR at 352-288-3401. Email: [birdheidi@aol.com](mailto:birdheidi@aol.com)

## CINDY'S COLUMN



*Love and Peace,*

*Cindy Mc*

**Make it a double.  
A true  
Daily Double  
that is.**

# A&Q

**AA Jeopardy  
Coming Soon**

You already have the answers.  
It's getting the questions right  
that really counts.

Hosted by District 17  
12:00 until 3:00pm.  
February 23, 2009  
Druid Hills United Methodist  
1712 SE Lake Weir Avenue  
Ocala, Florida

Lunch will be provided

## Regional Events and Meetings

### **Intensive Big Book Workgroup**

**7:00 pm, January 5, 2009**

First Presbyterian Church  
175 Lake Hollingsworth Drive  
Lakeland, FL

Featuring the compelling message of international speaker, Chris R. from Ingram, Texas. All invited. Baby sitting available on site. For more information, visit [intensivebigbookworkgroup.com](http://intensivebigbookworkgroup.com), call 863.698.0015, or email [scott@intensivebigbookworkgroup.com](mailto:scott@intensivebigbookworkgroup.com)

### **North Florida Area Assembly**

**January 9-11, 2009**

**Gainesville, FL  
Paramount Hotel**

Make hotel reservations early. Reservations: 877-992-9229 Mention North Florida Area conference of AA for reduced rates. More info: [www.aanorthflorida.org](http://www.aanorthflorida.org). (See page 4 for more details.)

**Central Florida Men's Workshop  
January 30-February 1, 2009  
Life Enrichment Center**

### **Leesburg, Florida**

Powerful speaker meetings throughout the weekend cover such topics as The 12 Steps, Spirituality, Traditions, Sobriety in the Workplace, Sex in Sobriety, and MUCH MORE! Breakout sessions on specific topics. The Bonfire Meetings. Closing ceremonies on Sunday morning. Great for the newcomer and the long-timer alike.

Begins Friday afternoon at 2:00 p.m. with an early bird meeting at 4:00 p.m. Come early for golf and fishing. Fee: \$160 after January 1, 2009. Advance registration required. No walk-ins or phone registration. More information at: [www.cflmw.com](http://www.cflmw.com)

### **Lake Sumter Intergroup Back to Basics Workshop March 28, 2009**

Leesburg Community Center  
109 East Dixie Avenue  
Leesburg, FL

Intensive one-day workshop led by Wally P of Tucson, Arizona. Modeled

on the original Beginners Meeting format from the 1940s. All twelve steps in one day. Registration fee: \$25. Dinner and speaker: additional \$15. Each fee increases \$5 after February 28, 2009. Registration forms available at Intergroup 17, Ocala. For more information, contact Rhonda H at 352-787-3340 or 352-504-1953.

Publicize your special events or meetings in *The Voice*. Send complete details including contact information to [aaocalamarion.org](http://aaocalamarion.org) or call 352-869-0660.



**InterGroup 17 Meetings  
You're invited!**

Anyone interested is urged to attend and learn more about all the great opportunities for service work within our local AA community.

**Next Meeting**

Sunday, January 11, 5:15 pm  
St Mark's United Methodist  
1839 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala

InterGroup Reps., please send your contact info to:  
ocalaintergroup@msn.com or call  
352-867-0660.

**InterGroup 17  
Ocala-Marion County  
Florida**

3666-A N.E. 25th Street, Ocala, Florida 34470  
Phone: 352-867-0660 Fax: 352-867-7819  
Email: ocalaintergroup@msn.com

**Hours of operation**

Monday-Friday 10 am to 5 pm  
Saturday 10 am to 2 pm

**Website**

[www.aaocalamarion.org](http://www.aaocalamarion.org)

**24-Hour Hotline**

**352-867-0660**

**Free Subscription. The Voice by e-mail.**

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send an e-mail with "Free Voice" in the subject line to:  
[ocalaintergroup@msn.com](mailto:ocalaintergroup@msn.com).

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Ocala, Florida 34470**

Stamp