



The Voice

Central Office, Marion County Intergroup

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Monthly Newsletter of Marion County Intergroup

April 2023

Step Fur

BY: SARAH S. | BRENTWOOD, MO

If her inventory had been fur-less, she wouldn't have had a chilly run-in with the truth

STEP FOUR: *"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory"*

What was your part?" That was my sponsor's response to me whenever I asked, "Why am I always under attack?"

As I saw it, coworkers, friends and family members mistreated me and had done so for years. My relationships were plagued by bullying, psychological torture and hostility. Without alcohol, the pain of these assaults was unbearable. I struggled to understand why people did these things to me. It was exhausting.

Protecting a sponsee was a sponsor's job, right? Yet when I whined, my sponsor repeated, "What's your part?" I reminded her repeatedly that I was the victim and they were the perpetrators. Sphinx-like, she dangled that unanswerable question. In time, she suggested I start a Fourth Step, saying it would help me cope with my constant suffering.

"Nope," I said. "Not doing it. Dredging up the past will hurt me all over again. Besides, writing a book of all the ways people have harmed me would take too long." She got pushy and earned a spot on my Fourth Step list.

I saw fellow newcomers get results as they worked the Steps. They seemed happy, joyous and free. The keys to progress must be in the later Steps, I figured. I dreamt of skipping to Step Six. My sponsor wouldn't let me move on until my Fourth Step was finished.

She suggested I pray about it. Wallowing in self-pity, I prayed sincerely for help. Sure enough, my Higher Power answered.

Isabelle, my parents' wealthy neighbor, generously gave me a faux fur coat. She wanted to help me feel better about myself, I imagined, but her stated reason was that she no longer enjoyed wearing it. The plush, expensive and beautifully made coat mimicked leopard fur convincingly. Faux fur was a rarity back then. I hoped people would think it was real.

Heading out on a sub-zero February morning, I took one last look in the mirror. I looked fabulous. Who could resist me? It was perfect for a night at the opera. The restaurant wanted me in early, so I braved the arctic air to warm up my reliable old car. It had chugged along faithfully for years without an oil change, a brake check or any care at all. Inside, a pine tree deodorizer masked the stench of fast-food wafting up from the floor...crunchy, stale fries, fast-food bags stuffed with trash, ketchup packets, salt and pepper shakers, plastic utensils and various cups, cans and bottles. The car was filthy inside and out. A current "wash me" scrawled in the thick coat of road crud would soon disappear under more dirt like a footprint in blowing snow.

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Important Dates

April 8th Area 14 Delegate's Pre-Conference Agenda Items Workshop (see p. 7)

• **April 15-16** North Florida Area Conference Quarterly Assembly (see p. 7)

• **April 22** District 17 Workshop "How to Chair a Meeting" (see p. 8)

• **Every Thursday** Area 14 Service. Workshop, 6:00pm; Hospitality, 5:45pm—New Topic every Thursday—Zoom Meeting ID: 828 5682 4762; pw: service

New Literature Price List will be distributed next Monday, 4/10/23

The Red Eye

Semi-Annual

Brunch

Thursday, 4/6/23

10am-11am

Lost & Found Club

616 S. Pine Ave

Speaker, Finger Foods, Desserts and Beverages

INTERGROUP OFFICE HOURS APRIL 2023

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 8:00 am to 3:00 pm

I want the hand of AA always to be there.

Hot Line 352-867-0660. 24/7 every day of the year

- The Intergroup Hot Line is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- If an AA member or group has an immediate need for medallions or literature outside office hours, arrangements will be made, please call 352 867-0660.



Step Fur, *continued from page 1*

Sitting in the driver's seat shivering, I thought someone had plastered brown paper all over the windshield. How mean! Before I got furious, I realized it was only dirt. I tried the wipers. The dirt was fused to the glass by a thick layer of ice. Drat. The grunge would not go away by itself. I stepped outside, and a brilliant idea came to me. A warm fluid would work. So simple. I spit a big wad of saliva onto the windshield and began to spread it out with my hand. The mass smeared maybe three inches before it froze solid, trapping my glove. Let me note here that frozen spit is nothing like ice; it's more like Super Glue. I managed to pull my hand out of the glove. With a plastic knife, I hacked away, trying to free the glove. Pieces of plastic flew everywhere but the glove remained stuck. Frostbite became a possibility. Embarrassed, late for work and desperate, I couldn't imagine how much worse this situation could get. Tears welled up in my eyes.

Right then, out of the blue, a handsome young man in a sports car came around the corner. It seemed like he was going to pass, but then he saw me and hit the brakes. Oh, blessed joy, I said to myself, help had arrived. The good Samaritan rolled down his window, yelled, "You're part of the problem!" and sped off.

Stunned and dumbfounded, this alcoholic, three months sober, watched the luxury sports car disappear around the corner. Crying, I saw my horrible little car for what it was. No scraper, no wiper fluid, filthy inside and out. The car had devolved to this through my actions and mine alone. The "Samaritan" was right, I was part of the problem.

I replayed the scene. It always ended with, "You're part of the problem." I recalled my sponsor's question,

"What was your part?" The two statements felt linked somehow. The notion took hold that my disaster of a car was a snapshot of my disastrous life. Fearfully, I started looking closely at my part in other aspects of my life. I reviewed times where I had been so sure I was a victim, but on closer inspection, I saw that I had played the starring role.

Things got worse. My roommate told me to move out. The day of the move, I found that someone had punctured all four of my tires. I knew she had her boyfriend do this. She was a horrible person. But then I thought it through. What would make her so vicious? Was she reacting to my behavior? Thinking back, my behavior toward her had been atrocious, what little I remembered of it. Again, I saw that I was part of the problem.

This discovery of mine applied also to my dating pattern toward the end of my drinking. There were first dates with no follow-up call. Different faces, same pattern. Who would want to date someone who throws up on her shoes, falls asleep at the dinner table and talks garbled pseudo-philosophical nonsense? Nobody. I was part of the problem.

After destroying a lucrative career, I had returned to college in my mid-30s. I recalled a big hayride, sponsored by the college back then. A lovely and romantic setting it was. I chased down men in their 20s, pinned them and stuffed hay under their shirts so they looked like the scarecrow in *The Wizard of Oz*. Three bonfires waited back at the stables where the ride ended. At bonfire three, I sat alone. I was drunk. Later I wondered why I was alone. Yep, I could see I was the problem.

My Higher Power had arranged a confluence of events that opened my eyes to reality. Smack dab in the middle of it all, I, the victim in the beautiful coat,

had orchestrated all the chaos and pain myself. True recovery started for me that day. I wasn't a victim—I was the problem. That realization saved my life. The truth really did set me free. It was a soft landing. No one took my inventory or shamed me. I was given the courtesy to discover what "victim" means on my own. When I told my wise sponsor the sad story, she suppressed a laugh but otherwise said nothing. She did not ask the usual question, "What was your part?" That question had been answered by a "drive-by-shouting." My sponsor knew it was the fur coat that had infuriated that guy, but I didn't. Back then, it was a thing to yell at people wearing animal skins. Sometimes fur wearers even had fake blood thrown at them. I was oblivious. I didn't follow the news or fashion trends. I was busy being drunk. The man could have yelled, "Your coat is part of the problem." But then he wouldn't have pushed me into self-awareness. It's funny now; not so much at the time. I thank God my Higher Power has a sense of humor.

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Tradition Four “

“Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.”

BY: PAUL D | OCALA, FL

During my lifetime as a member of A.A., I haven't spent much time and energy trying to understand the 12 Traditions. I do understand the importance of them, if we are to maintain the integrity of the program and the guidelines of the Traditions need to be adhered to.

When I was asked to pen a few words on this subject, it occurred to me how important Tradition 4 is in maintaining the integrity of my Big Book Step Study Group. Tradition 4 states that each group ought to be autonomous, except in matters affecting other A.A. groups or A.A. as a whole. Our group follows quite a rigid format with regards to how we do the 12 Steps. At the start of the meeting, we read the group's Mission Statement and the criteria in order for a person to be qualified to speak at the meeting. We make it clear that our way of doing the work is quite different than many of the other methods being used in A.A. and that if you haven't done the work with a sponsor with experience with the Big Book Step Study method, then you are not qualified to speak at our meeting.

One evening, a young man had declared himself qualified to speak and in a short time it was clear to me that he wasn't. I interrupted him politely and asked him to pass. He was quite belligerent about the

fact that he had done the 12 Steps and that's where Tradition 4 supported my position. I told him that I understood he had worked the steps and asked him again if he had followed the method that we used at our group. He said, he hadn't and that's when I pointed out to him that our group had the right to implement our own format based on Tradition 4. I told him that I hoped he would stay and get involved in our group and then he understood how the Tradition 4 gave our group the right to create a format that we felt worked the best for us. We believe that the Big Book Step Study process is the best way we can carry the message of how we recovered from alcoholism to the alcoholic who still suffers. Not only from the physical craving for alcohol, but from the mental obsession. All of our members have spent time at open discussion meetings, and we understand that they have a purpose. But, some of us get to the place in our recovery where we knew if we didn't do something more, that our sobriety would be in jeopardy. It is vitally important that groups like ours have the right, given to us by the Tradition 4 to maintain the integrity of our group.



In lieu of the cancelled A.A. Picnic on October 1, 2022
If you purchased a ticket for the 10/1/22 Picnic, please call the
Intergroup Office—352-867-0660

Intergroup/Central Office is sponsoring
AA Fun Day/Picnic
Silver Springs Shores Community & Youth Center
590 Silver Road, Ocala, FL 34472

Saturday, May 6, 2023 ≈
11:00am—4:00pm

Bring your Favorite Dessert &
Chairs & Blankets (if you want to sit outside)
but plenty of seating inside

Music by DJ—John Andrews & 2 AA Speakers

Hot Dogs, Hamburgers,
Cole Slaw, Potato Salad,
Beverages & Desserts

Many Raffles—
• 50/50, Quilt, variety of Big
Books & Book Covers, AA
Mugs, Spiritual Books and
much more

• Kids Games & Face Painting
• Competition Adult Volley Ball
OR Horse Shoes
(Possibly *Intergroup v District*
OR Headstart v Happy, Joyous, & Free OR
any other AA Group that would like to
participate in some friendly competition)

Adult Tickets \$10/Kids Tickets \$5
If you purchased a ticket for 2022 Picnic,
please call Intergroup Office 352-867-0660



Calling all AA Authors of Marion County

Where are you? I know for a
fact there is much experience,
strength and hope to be
shared by AA members.

Raise Your Voice. Tell Your Story.

Each month The Voice features a local member sharing their experience, strength, and hope about the step of the month.

We invite you to submit yours for consideration and possible publication. Choose a step that's particularly meaningful to you and put "pen to paper." Keep it to between 500 and 700 words.

Call Central Office for more info and to claim your step.
352-867-0660

Upcoming Retreats

Prodigal Sons V Spring 2023 Retreat

May 12 thru May 14

Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center

Leesburg, FL

(352-483-9800)

Registration forms available @ Ocala Intergroup Office

22nd Into Sobriety Women's d Spring Conference

May 5, 6, 7, 2023

Join us for 3 incredible days of celebrations, fellowship, recovery and unity at the beautiful Hotel Venezia, Florida

SIS Conference | 22nd Spring Into Sobriety Women's Conference

<https://sisconference.com>



*Celebration of Life
 Tim Smith
 Friday, April 14th
 4:00pm-6:00pm
 Ocala Downtown Market Place*

**Delegate's Pre-Conference
 Agenda Items Workshop**

**Saturday, April 8, 2023
 11:00am to 1:00pm**

**Dunnellon Presbyterian Church
 20641 Chestnut Street
 Dunnellon, FL 34431**

Food & Beverages Served
 Hosted Jointly By:
 Districts, 7A, & 7B, 13, 17 & 28




**North Florida Area Conference
 Area 14 Assembly**

"I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible."

Saturday-Sunday, April 15-16
 North Florida Area Conference Quarterly Assembly
 Mission Inn Resort & Club
 10400 County Road 48
 Howey-in-the-Hills, FL USA 34737
 Complete details: www.aanorthflorida.org for
 Assembly Agenda and Info

YOU'RE INVITED

Chairing a Meeting AA Etiquette
A District 17 workshop for everyone



Business Meeting:
Setting Chairperson Criteria
 Home group member
 Length of Sobriety
 Reading of the "rules"
 Topic Selection

AA Etiquette
 How does the chair address the AAA?
 Limit or redirect a member's discussion
 Enforce the "rules"
 Address the "wet drunk"

Presenter: Dan E
Saturday, April 22, 2023
2:00 to 4:00 pm
 Lost & Found Club, 616 S. Pine Avenue, Ocala, FL 3
 Snacks & Beverages Served

Sponsored by
 District 17, North Florida Area Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous

RECOVERY on the Square

Saturday, April 29th 2023
 1 SE Broadway Street, Ocala, FL 34471
 Noon—4:00pm



Guest
 Speakers
 & Music

**20th Mano Abierata (Open Hand)
 Group Anniversary**
 St. John's United Methodist
 12390 W Hwy 328, Ocala FL 34482
Saturday, April 29th '23 @ 7:30pm

*Come and help us celebrate
 Covered dishes and Desserts welcome*



Birthdays

APRIL

Head Start

Steve T—1
 Tracy R—2
 Lindsey D—2
 Ed N—2
 Jacob S—3
 Becky F—3
 Joe J—6
 Paul M—12
 Ben—27
 Liza W—28
Living Sober
 Roge H—36
 R.C. W—41

ODAT

Destiny L—1
 Vince R—2
 Rich L—7
 Gus G—11
 George—28
 Diane S—29
 Tim R—31
 Liz R—33
 Skip H—33
 Mary T—45
We Give Up
 Kim Mc—13
 Sherry R—34

Congrats!!!



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

Contributions

March

Alive and Well	\$ 75.00
Belleview Eye Opener	\$ 150.00
Birthday Club	\$ 27.00
Experience, Strength & Hope	\$ 73.75
Faithful Fivers	\$120.00
Headstart	\$415.05
Individual	\$ 73.48
Last Call	\$ 50.00
New Attitudes	\$400.00
Paypal	\$ 20.00
Sunday After Lunch Bunch	\$100.00

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
 ~~~

**50% to Central Office/Intergroup 17**  
**616 S Pine Avenue**  
**Ocala, FL 3447**



## North Florida Area Conference Area 14 Assembly

"I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible."

**Saturday-Sunday, April 15-16**

North Florida Area Conference Quarterly Assembly  
Mission Inn Resort & Club  
10400 County Road 48  
Howey-in-the-Hills, FL USA 34737

Complete details: [www.aanorthflorida.org](http://www.aanorthflorida.org) for Assembly Agenda and Info  
Hotel booking deadline. **March 15.** Book through [area website](#).

**Get in the Know. Raise Your Voice.** Your Area 14 Delegate is coming to preview the topics that will appear on the agenda of the next **General Service Conference** and could have impact on AA Fellowship locally and worldwide. This is **your chance** to learn more and **express your opinions**. Your voice counts. Plan to attend.

**Delegate's Pre-Conference  
Agenda Items Workshop**

**Saturday, April 8, 2023  
11:00am to 1:00pm**

**Dunnellon Presbyterian Church  
20641 Chestnut Street  
Dunnellon, FL 34431**

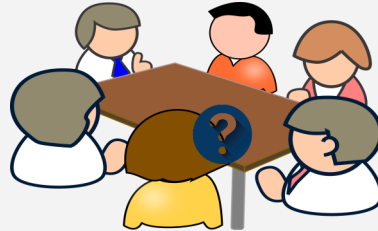
**Food & Beverages Served**  
Hosted Jointly By:  
Districts, 7A, & 7B, 13, 17 & 28





**YOU'RE INVITED**  
**Chairing a Meeting**  
**AA Etiquette**

**A District 17 workshop for everyone**



**Business Meeting:**

**Setting Chairperson Criteria**

Home group member  
Length of Sobriety  
Reading of the "rules"  
Topic Selection

**AA Etiquette**

How does the chair address the AAA?  
Limit or redirect a member's discussion  
Enforce the "rules"  
Address the "wet drunk"

**Presenter: Dan E**  
**Saturday, April 22, 2023**  
**2:00 to 4:00 pm**

Lost & Found Club, 616 S. Pine Avenue, Ocala, FL 34471  
Snacks & Beverages Served

**Sponsored by**

District 17, North Florida Area Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous



**Weir Crazy Group**  
**Miracles in May Annual Dinner**  
**Celebration of Bill W & Dr. Bob**

**May 17th 2023 @ 5:00pm**

**Guest Speaker**

**Christ Lutheran**  
**15699 SE 80th Street**  
**Summerfield, FL 34491**

*Bring a covered dish—Meat and drinks provided*