



**The Voice**

616 S. Pine Ave  
Ocala, FL 34471  
352 867-0660  
aaocalaintergroup@gmail.com

Monthly Newsletter of Marion County Intergroup Office

DECEMBER 2023

One member's voice

## The perfect night

Just as the midnight mass bells were ringing, he and his partner were heading to jail  
**STEP TWELVE:** *"Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out."*

When friends asked what I was doing for Christmas Eve 2019, I smiled and said, "Going to jail." A friend and I were taking an AA meeting to incarcerated fellows at our local county jail. I had even added something self-serving like, "I can't think of a better place to be on Christmas Eve."

Well, I sure didn't feel that way on that dark and cold December night in Michigan when I first arrived in the parking lot opposite the forbidding institution. I really wanted to be home with my wife and our new cat and the gas fireplace we had given ourselves for Christmas. Plus, I was feeling more than a little sorry for myself because the Christmas Eve jail AA service meant missing midnight mass, which at our church began at 8 p.m. to allow the aging faithful to get to bed at a decent hour.

Sure, I could go to mass the next day on Christmas morning, and that would certainly count with the

church, but I would miss all the magic of midnight mass. And wouldn't you know, the church on the other side of the jail's parking lot rang its bells, summoning folks to come inside and worship on a cold, dark night. I looked over longingly at the warm, cozy church's glowing stained-glass windows and watched worshippers eagerly climb the church steps in anticipation of some midnight marvels. Oh, how I wanted to join them.

But then I looked over at my partner in our Twelfth Step work and decided I couldn't let him down. There had to be at least two of us outsiders for there to be an AA meeting at the jail. And, well, wasn't there also that line from Step Twelve about carrying "this message to alcoholics." I knew that I had a solemn duty to carry the message of my recovery to my incarcerated brothers on this side of the parking lot.

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### Important Dates

- **December 10th**  
Intergroup/Central Office  
Representative meet  
Lost & Found  
616 S. Pine Ave
- **No meeting in December**  
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**

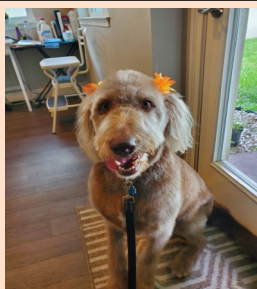
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**FAITHFUL FIVERS**  
Contribute \$5/month  
or \$60/year

*Contributors:  
Joe S, Phil H, Ralph W*

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

**Intergroup's 4-legged Visitors  
are always welcome**



**Sheba**



**Bandit**



**Pawnee**



**Trudy**



continued from page 1

The church bells rang again, reminding me that I had a choice to make, and make it I did that cold, clear night in Michigan. My partner and I took the AA meeting into the county jail on Christmas Eve—and what a meeting it turned out to be!

I don't have to tell you, because you know, what happens when we AAs share our experience, strength and hope with one another. Serenity happens... peace prevails. The Promises are fulfilled among us, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. they will always materialize if we work for them. And we band of brothers—in green jump suits, blue jeans and flannel shirts—

worked for them.

Because it was Christmas Eve, we got extra time on our meeting because the correctional staff was short-handed for the holiday. It was all too beautiful.

Once back in the parking lot, my partner in crime and I wished one another a Merry Christmas and agreed we couldn't have found a better way to spend this night. And don't you know, I went to our church on Christmas Day and got so much more out of it because I had been saved by the bells the night before.

BY: CHARLES M. | HARBERT, MICHIGAN

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**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 **would like to feature a local member** to share 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 between 500 and 700 words.

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

**Winner for November Intergroup Basket Raffle  
~ Wilson, Living Sober Group**

**December Basket Raffle @ Central Office/Intergroup  
616 S Pine Ave, Ocala, FL  
Drawing will be Saturday, December 23, 2023  
@ Belleview Speaker Meeting, Belleview, FL**

Items for Raffle: AA Christmas Ornament, Recovery Mug, Gratitude Trinket Dish, Gratitude Book, Emotional Sobriety Books 1&2: Drop the Rock, Drop the Rock Ripple Effect, 24-Hour Book, Keep It Simple *Meditation Book*, Experience, Strength & Hope book

All proceeds help support the Central Office Intergroup

**AA Historical Events in December**

**12/11/34**—Bill Wi takes his last drink and enters Towns Hospital Bill has a spiritual experience there & obsession with alcohol removed.

**12/34**—Bill and Lois start attending Oxford Group meetings with Ebby

**12/38**— Bill began writing the 12 Steps using the Oxford Group principals and the idea of "plugging the holes of an alcoholic might 'riggle' through."

**12/40**—Chicago Daily Tribune begins four article series on AA by Nall Hamilton.



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

**December 5, 2023**

"By 1937, some of us realized that AA needed a standard literature. There would have to be a book ... Well, we did quarrel violently over the preparation and distribution of that book. In fact, it took five years for the clamor to die down. Should any AAs dream that the old-timers who put the book together went about in serene meditation and white robes, then they had best forget it."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., November 1951, "Services Make AA Tick", *The Language of the Heart*



**Living Sober presents**  
**2nd Sunday Speaker Meeting**  
**December 10th @ 6:30pm**  
**Christine B - Speaker**  
**Our Redeemer Lutheran Church**  
**5200 SW College Road (SR 200)**

**PLEASE NOTE:**  
**Living Sober WILL NOT have a meeting on**  
**Sunday, December 24th at Our Redeemer Lutheran. Thank you.**

**Sunday After Lunch Bunch**  
**Will meet on Christmas Eve, December 24th @ 3pm**  
**with a potluck and fellowship. We are not alone anymore.**  
**Joy Lutheran Church**  
**7045 SW 83rd Place 34476**

**Stay tuned for updates**  
**on Unity Christmas lunch**  
**and Ocala Group Alcathor**



# Birthdays

## December

<b>Belleview Group</b>	<b>Living Sober</b>
Tony E -2	Bruce R—1
Janeen C -10	Jim—1
<b>Breakfast Club</b>	Diane I—19
Gregg M—2	Joe S—38
Alex S—23	<b>On Awakening</b>
<b>Head Start</b>	Laura D—2
Aliye C—16	<b>We Give Up</b>
Max R—17	Dick C—31
Lisa S—23	

# Contributions

## November

Anonymity Group	\$ 57.00
Breakfast Club	\$ 260.82
Happy, Joyous & Free	\$ 267.33
Headstart	\$ 150.62
Lunch Bunch	\$ 163.84
One Day At A Time	\$ 224.02
Primary Purpose	\$ 88.27
Sundae Social	\$ 175.00
Weir Crazy	\$ 200.00

# Congrats!!!



**REMINDER** - To have Group Member's Birthdays acknowledged in The Voice information needs to be forwarded to Intergroup/Central Office [aaocalaintergroup@gmail.com](mailto: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