



The Voice

Central Office, Marion County Intergroup

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Monthly Newsletter of Marion County Intergroup

March 2023

Feeling Free

BY: PAUL M. | BOULDER, COLO.

A member shares how our Third Step Prayer gives him a sense of peace, acceptance and joy

STEP THREE: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him

Early in my sobriety I found my way to a men’s Big Book Step study meeting and met a guy named Bob who became my sponsor that very day. Bob is militant about working the Steps, reading the Big Book and following the practices exactly as they’re set out. No deviations. I was to start each day reading the Big Book or “Twelve and Twelve” and check in with him every day. Being a rebel at heart I found the structure both challenging and curiously beneficial.

We would meet at 9 A.M. on Saturday mornings at my house. We’d sit in my home office as he read the Big Book out loud. I didn’t understand why he read to me. “Shouldn’t I read also?” I asked.

“No,” he said, this is the way my sponsor did it with me and this is the way I am doing it with you. This is the

way we do it.” I winced when Bob asked me to get on my knees to say the Third Step Prayer. It wasn’t an invitation. It was somewhere between a suggestion and a command. In my mind I heard myself say, No thank you, I don’t get on my knees for anybody.

To say I was resistant is an understatement. Something made me relinquish though. I knelt next to Bob in a corner of my home office and we said the Third Step Prayer together—a first for me.

The Third Step Prayer has become an integral part of my daily practice. I often say it at night as I go to bed. If I wake up and I’m restless during the night, I say it. Also, mornings before I meditate and during the day to ground myself.

Often I recite the words and don’t really pay attention. Sometimes I listen

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Important Dates

- **March 11th** Drop the Rock 1-4pm DAV, 9636 SE 58th Ave \$5 at the Door (see p. 4)
- **March 12th** Intergroup/Central Office Representative meeting @ **Noon**, Lost & Found Club
- **March 30th** District 17 monthly meeting, 6:45pm, Unity Place, 525 NE Sanchez
- **April 3rd** AA World Service **price increase** — Literature 20%; Pamphlets 30% (see p. 6)
- **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

INTERGROUP OFFICE HOURS MARCH 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.



Feeling Free, *continued from page 1*

to the words but don't really feel it. And sometimes I pay attention, listen and allow the words to penetrate. When I do, when the words flow meaningfully, I feel a shift in my body, a somatic experience of dropping down into a place of deeper sensing. Lately I find myself wondering, What does it mean to live the Third Step Prayer, to embody this prayer, to make it part of my life in a deeper way? "Dear God, oh Great Spirit," I begin. "I offer myself to you, to build with me, to do with me as you will." My sponsor says it's OK for me to adapt the wording. For me, it is meaningful to say it this way. It's easy for me to say these words and want to remain firmly in control and have the day work out according to my plan. When I mean it, when I offer myself unconditionally without reservation, I can feel vulnerable. When I surrender to these feelings I feel the presence of Spirit, my Higher Power.

"Relieve me of the bondage of self that I may better do your will." For most of my life, certainly for the 50 years alcohol was part of my life, I thought booze gave me freedom. I thought of myself as a wonder of creation able to achieve great things when I was drinking. But I was delusional. It wasn't until I started working the Steps that I experienced freedom in surrender. Only now do I see how much my delusional thinking was self-destructive. Only now


do I see how I was enslaved by my will, my ego and my defects of character, holding me captive, holding me in bondage. "Take away my difficulties that I may be a lesson to others of your power, your love and the way of spirit." I notice that my breathing slows, the chatter in my head quiets down, and I feel calmer when I ask Spirit to take away my difficulties. I can be present, open to what I'm sensing and seeing right now. It leaves me feeling free, more at peace and able to accept things as they are.

One day recently my grown daughter said, "Dad, you are much more patient than you used to be." Before I gave up alcohol, I probably would have responded with an indepth explanation of how I learned to be more patient. Not anymore. I didn't tell my daughter that every morning I ask how I can be of service. I didn't tell her I have done yeoman's work to be responsible for my resentments. I didn't tell her that, for me, patience is a byproduct of sobriety. I will wait patiently for her to ask. She may ask, she may not.

"May I always do your will." Turning our will and life over to God is not for the faint of heart. It takes courage. Who knows what he/she has in store for us, what he/she will require of us. Who knows what challenges we may face.

Be careful what you wish for; you may get it. Happiness, joy and purposefulness are all on the menu.

**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



Safe to Belong

BY: JOHN C. | BERLIN, WIS.

He expresses his gratitude for Tradition Three and how it helped him claim his chair

Tradition Three *“The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.”*

Recently, at my regular Friday AA meeting, we discussed “God-incidences,” those events where God’s will is expressed anonymously.

Most members know how AA came about, but I think there was a major God-incidence involved in AA’s founding. It involved our two cofounders. Bill W. got sober and never drank again, while Dr. Bob sobered up, went to a convention and drank again before beginning his journey of permanent sobriety.

Just imagine how AA might have turned out if both men never drank again. We might have become a group where alcoholics were judged harshly or even expelled if they relapsed. We might not have lasted very long with such an intolerant attitude. Of course, if both men had relapsed, our Fellowship could even have ceased to exist and many more people would be dying from alcoholism.

The beauty of this God-incidence is that it helped make AA available to anyone who wants it. A newcomer can look to Bill’s example and think, If he could do it, so can I. While those who relapse can take comfort in knowing that they will be treated with the same love and compassion that was given to Dr. Bob.

When I first joined AA, I was completely oblivious to all the God-incidences in my life, and I was sure that everything that happened to me prior to my surrender in AA was simply bad luck.

Back then, I didn’t realize that my Higher Power had been watching over me all those years I was drinking. I came to AA as an atheist who had no use for the concept of a Higher Power. In early sobriety, I lived in a state of constant fear and pain because of my arrogant attitude, an example of “white-knuckle sobriety.” I’m grateful that like Bill, I have been continuously sober since I joined because I know that I was the kind of alcoholic who, if I were to relapse, probably wouldn’t make it back to AA.

A friend of mine once said that she wasn’t afraid that she’d die if she drank again, she was afraid that she’d live. That same fear kept me sober for years—so “dry” that I was a fire danger!—until I was finally humble enough to consider the possibility of a Higher Power that I could turn my will and my life over to.

For the last few years, I’ve begun to move, however haltingly, toward surrendering my will to a Higher Power. I don’t always do it perfectly, but the program tells me to strive for progress rather than perfection. For an all-or-nothing person like me, this is a comforting lesson in that it allows me to let go of my perfectionism.

I’m truly grateful that I was able to remain in the Fellowship for those early years because the Third Tradition—which I believe was another God-incidence—told me that I could claim membership no matter what I believed as long as I had the desire to stop drinking, which I had in spades.

Today, I’m grateful that I’m learning to recognize all the God-incidences I see every day and to know that I had nothing to do with them.

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In Loving Memory

Celebration of Life



*John
Garr*

March 19th ≈ 2:00-4:00pm
Lost & Found Club

Celebration of Life
Gordan Tabor-Rhodes

March 25th—11am
St. Mary's Episcopal Church
5750 SE 115th Street
Bellevue, FL 34420

Fellowship following

Upcoming Retreats

**30TH ANNUAL HOUSECLEANING
Spiritual Retreat for
A.A. & Al-Anon
Lake Yale Conference Center, FL
or Zoom/Phone
March 10-12, 2023**

Online Registration Available:

www.retreatforaa-alanon.com

In person retreat for those who are vaccinated

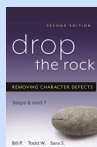
**Matt Talbot Men's 12-Step Retreat
at the
Franciscan Retreat Center
3010 N. Perry Ave, Tampa, FL 33603
March 17-19, 2023
(cost \$285 for the weekend)
Contact Rick R 352-817-0397 OR
Joe S 240-216-4198**

Registration form online: matttalbot129.com

Drop the Rock Workshop

3 Moderators from Jacksonville

March 11th 2023 1:00—4:00pm
DAV (Disabled American Veterans)
9636 SE 58th Ave, Bellevue, FL 34420
\$5 at the door
(includes Pizza @ 4pm, beverages, desserts)
50/50 Raffle



**The Red Eye Group
Semi-Annual Brunch/Speaker**
Tuesday, April 6th 2023 » 10:00—11:00am
**Lost & Found Club
616 S Pine Ave**

Finger foods ≈ Desserts ≈ Beverages





Letter received from AAWS regarding price increases in AA literature and pamphlets. The original letter can be found on *aa.org* on the homepage and scroll down to the bottom of the home page and click on *What's New* to see the original letter.

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc

Date: February 15, 2023

Intergroup and Central Offices
International General Services Offices

Warm greetings – we hope that this letter finds you well. We are writing today to inform you of an upcoming price increase affecting our English, Spanish, and French books, booklets, and pamphlets. The new prices will go into effect on April 3, 2023, and generally reflect a 20% increase on books and a 30% increase on pamphlets (with rounding and some minor adjustments).

Some of you have indicated that you anticipated the need for an increase. For historical reference, the last price increases were made in 2014 (18.75%) and 2009 (33.3%). The decision to raise prices in 2023 resulted from prudent fiscal planning with the goal of longer-range stability. Alcoholics Anonymous is not immune from the changes that are impacting all businesses, and one of the greatest to us has been a notable drop in the margins associated with the sale of our literature. To be specific, prior to the SARS-CoV2 pandemic, the costs associated with the production, material, warehousing, and shipping of literature, collectively known as the cost of goods sold, hovered between 31-34% of sales. These same costs have fluctuated from 42- 56% of sales in the last two years, resulting in a revenue loss that is greater than \$1.2 million each year. We do not expect this change in the cost of goods sold to resolve in our favor, and the impact is great when considering that the General Service Office is supported through both voluntary contributions and this revenue associated with the sale of literature. We continue to monitor and trim expenses where possible, being mindful of the immense significance of each ‘nickel in the basket’ sent to the General Service Board.

Central Office/Intergroup Marion County will be adjusting the prices of AA Literature and pamphlets. The Steering Committee and Intergroup Representatives will meeting on **Sunday, March 12, 2023 @ Noon, Lost & Found Club, 616 S Pine Ave, Ocala and will be discussing how best to adjust prices accordingly. If your group does not have an Intergroup Representative this would be the right time to elect and send a representative.**

Birthdays

MARCH

Head Start

Bobby J B—1
 Beau E—2
 Rebecca—2
 Nick D—3
 Josh Q—3
 Joel L—5
 Mick H—15
 Blenda—35

ODAT

Kathy L—3
 Francisco—3
 Buzz—10
 Patrick P—26
 Billy D—29
 Chris V—31
 Gregg P—35
 Carol B—36
 John L—38

We Give Up

Linda H—22
 Ray T—25



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 March for April Birthdays.

Contributions

February

11th Step Meditation	\$ 150.00
Anonymity Group	\$ 102.00
Bellevue Speaker	\$ 60.00
Birthday Club	\$ 46.00
By the Book	\$ 41.00
Cabin in the Woods	\$ 50.00
Emotional Balance	\$ 55.00
Faithful Fivers	\$ 5.00
Heavy Hitters	\$ 10.00
Mano Abierta	\$ 20.00
No Name Group	\$ 30.00
One Day At A Time	\$200.00
PayPal/Individual	\$217.10
Primary Purpose	\$ 39.87
Reflections Group	\$150.00
Weir Crazy	\$ 85.00

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 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**



## 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

## Women of AA. You can help when no one else can.

If you're a **sober woman** with a desire to serve, the District 17 Women's Corrections Committee needs your help. Each week, women like you carry AA's message to other alcoholic women, in local correctional institutions, who want to live sober, one day at a time. These women serve as a vital link connecting those who might otherwise never find AA to the fellowship and our program of recovery.

### How It works

- ◆ We take meetings to the women at Lowell Correctional Institution several times a week — how often you participate and when is up to you.
- ◆ Participation requires an orientation and approval process, completed almost entirely online, as well as fingerprinting.
- ◆ Experienced committee members serve as mentors helping new volunteers learn the ropes.

### Take the first step. Learn more.

Even if you are not ready to make the commitment, you owe it to yourself to find out if carrying the message this way is right for you.

Call **Central Office 352-867-0660**

