



The Voice

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

Central Office, Marion County Intergroup

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Monthly Newsletter of Marion County Intergroup

May 2023

Step Five—*Admitted to God, to ourselves, and another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*

BY: Bob G. | Madison, Wis

SET FREE—Something big changed in him sitting in Eric’s car that afternoon. And it’s a gift he gets to pass on to others

Eric and I sat in his old sedan on a spring afternoon in Rosedale Park as I read from my Fourth Step inventory. That day I was doing my Fifth Step with my sponsor, admitting to him “the exact nature of my wrongs” and uncovering the resentments and fears that I had built up over my 23 years of life. The last seven of those years had involved blackout drinking to cover my overwhelming fear that I could not live life like other people. I believed that I simply wasn’t equipped for life and my mind assaulted me with constant observations and reminders of my inadequacy. I had been sober only a few months and I was still struggling with the intensity of the emotions I had been desperately trying to avoid by drinking.

Eric, my sponsor, had parked the car in a rural park within view of a small lake where a few people were fishing. Between us and the lake spread a vast meadow of green. The sun was shining. And I felt like there might not be any hope for me. Our previous two attempts at my Fifth Step had resulted in aggravating arguments. I had struggled to defend my point of view that there was nothing I could do to improve my life. I wanted to prove to Eric that I had not contributed in any way to the many difficulties in my life. Life was unfairly happening to me and all I could do was sit in paralysis,

shaking my fist at the injustice of it all. Eric’s car was legendary. It had more than 250,000 miles on it. The ceiling of the interior was completely shredded, revealing intricate layers of foam, rubber and discolored metal. I remember worrying that there could even be asbestos somewhere in all those layers. To make this worse, Eric smoked cigarettes constantly. I hated smokers.

I had heard Eric speak at my second AA meeting. I felt like he was reading my journal. All of the things that I thought were unique to me—fear of not being good enough, living scared—Eric had shared these same feelings in public at a meeting. And he had also shared from the perspective of someone who had made some peace with these fears, who could lean into his life and show up every day sober.

Listening to him, I felt a sense of hope and I asked him to take me through the Steps. Yet I was so afraid that what had worked for him wouldn’t work for me. He asked me if I was willing to go to any lengths. I had been thinking a lot about killing myself lately, so yes, I was willing to go to any lengths. I had exhausted all

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Important Dates

May 21st Area 14 Delegate’s Post-Conference Results.
Dunnellon Presbyterian Church
20641 Chestnut Street
Dunnellon, FL 34431
Food & Fellowship

May 27th 2:00-4:00pm Living Grace & Ocala Sobriety Online
Baseline Trailhead Park Pavilion #1
(see p. For flyer)

District #17 Monthly
May 25th @ 7:00pm
Unity Place
525 NE Sanchez Ave.

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



Weir Crazy Group
Miracles in May Annual Dinner
Celebration of Bill W & Dr. Bob
Wednesday, May 17th 2023 @ 5:00pm

Christ Lutheran, 15699 SE 80th St., Summerfield, FL
Bring a covered dish—Meat and drinks provided
Speaker



Step Five, *continued from page 1*

my other options. I felt hopeless. Now it was a few months later and—with Eric’s consistent guidance—I had managed to live sober for more than three months, a day at a time. In the car, I had a stack of papers on my lap, some of which we had already reviewed. The week before, we had a huge argument about my resentment against my mother. I was unwilling to budge from my position that I was a victim who had been mistreated and my situation in life was everybody else’s fault.

This day in the car, I read aloud a resentment I had about a police officer. I told Eric how I had given a ride home to a guy from an AA meeting a few weeks ago. This guy was really weird and, frankly, I didn’t like him. By giving him a ride, I was trying to do the right thing and help another alcoholic. The drive to his home was significantly out of my way.

After dropping the guy off, a police officer stopped me and gave me a ticket for running a red light. I was absolutely incensed. I was convinced that the light was yellow when I passed through the intersection. In fact, I began mapping out how, in traffic court, I would contest the ticket using a physics equation to account for the speed limit and the distance to the traffic light. I would prove I was right!

I explained to Eric that everybody squeaks through traffic lights when they are yellow. I was so mad because I was sober, not drunk driving, and trying to do the right thing by giving a weirdo a ride home after an AA meeting. And I got a ticket. It was all so unfair. I explained how this incident represented my life—no matter what I did, everything I do ends in crap. Now, my car insurance rate would go up all because of a mistaken of a police officer.

Eric tried to get me to see the other side—my part—but I wouldn’t hear it. I continued to argue. Completely exasperated, he asked me a direct question, quite loudly, “Bob! Bob! What are you supposed to do at a yellow light?”

Taken aback and a little insulted by his tone, I responded with disdain, stating

the obvious, “Slow down.” He then immediately countered, “And what did you do?!” “I sped up,” I replied.

Eric threw his hands up in the air and just looked at me. There was a silence that seemed like an eternity. I felt something awake within me. Suddenly, I exclaimed, “Oh, I get it! I sped up and I was supposed to slow down.” It was like I had reached the peak of a mountain and I could finally view the landscape all around me. I felt a clearing within me open up as though everything looked suddenly different.

Sitting in that dilapidated car, I felt like I was in some kind of sacred, holy place. That was the turning point. We were finally able to finish my Fifth Step that afternoon. I stopped arguing with Eric and started seeing my part in each of my resentments. Decades of shame, guilt, hurt and fear were brought out into the open. And it was OK. I finally understood something that had eluded me and tortured me for years—my actions did make a difference and had an impact on myself and others. My actions invited responses from the world around me. I was not just a passive object being continually wronged. I did have a part in what happened to me. I could take responsibility for my actions. And that turned out to be the key to the freedom I’ve experienced in recovery.

Eric is still my sponsor, and he has said that I’ve never been the same since that pivotal moment. It’s 22 years later and I’m still sober. And now I love seeing that light go on in the eyes of the men that I sponsor, when they finally make that connection that sets them free.

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INTERGROUP OFFICE HOURS MAY 2023

8:30am–3:00pm
(M, T, W and Th)
Closed Fri, Sat & Sun

*If literature or medallions
are needed after hours,
call 352-867-0660 and
arrangements will be made*

AA Historical Events in May

- **May ‘35 Bill W called Walter Tunks from the Mayflower Hotel, and was referred to Henrietta Seiberling who setup a meeting with Dr. Bob**
- **May ‘38—Bill W and other AAs began writing the Big Book**
- **May ‘41—Jacksonville, FL newspaper reported the start on an AA group**
- **May ‘43—AA Akron Group celebrates 8th anniversary with 500 present and sober**
- **May ‘51—Al-Anon was founded by Lois W and Anne B**
- **May ‘56— The first English AA Convention was held in Cheltenham, England**



Traditon Five

“Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers .”

BY: Deb W. | Spokane, WA

It’s a Seat, Not A THRONE—While sitting in her well-deserved chair one day, she temporarily forgot about her group’s primary purpose

I BELONG here! That thought comes into my head as I sit in my home group. It’s Saturday morning. I have earned my seat here in Alcoholics Anonymous. It’s a well-deserved chair. Before the meeting starts, I hear laughter and lots of chattering and see hugs. We like to call this interaction fellowshiping. I just smile to myself with expectations of how the meeting will go today.

I grab my coffee and sit in my usual spot. I’m full of gratitude that I found my way out of hell and into a new way of living. I hear the gavel pound at the other end of the room. “Ladies, it’s time to start the meeting,” the chairperson says. I sit up straight, ready to listen.

I see out of the corner of my eye a woman who comes in late. She shuffles to a seat. Clearly an intoxicated street person, she carries on mumbling under her breath. She starts to pull things out of her bag and displays them on the table. It seems as if these are the only treasures she has left. I continue to watch her with curiosity. It’s as if I were looking in a mirror and seeing a reflection of my own past wreckage and hopelessness.

The woman continues in her own world and gets up and down and moves around throughout the meeting. Becoming irritated, I feel my gratitude shift to an attitude of bratitude. Her disruption continues. I hear only part of today’s message, which is about Tradition Five.

“Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”

Our AA meeting ends, and I abruptly walk out. I know I need another meeting to help adjust my attitude. I drive across town to another AA meeting. I think my irritable condition will probably change in a more well-behaved meeting. I walk up the stairs and head down the hall. I can smell the coffee and hear laughter. I know I’m in the right place. The chairperson is setting up the chairs in a circle. There’s one chair in the middle with a Big Book on it. Never have I seen a meeting set up like this before. The meeting opens with the Serenity Prayer. Interestingly, Tradition Five is the topic here as well. I pull out my “Twelve and Twelve” and we go around the circle reading.

As I listen, silence fills me, and I reflect on what took place earlier at my home group. I can see that in my arrogance I had been playing God. Yes, I earned my seat in AA, but had it become a throne? Who am I to judge any meeting or newcomer who I come in contact with?

I look at the empty chair in the middle of the circle and tears well up inside me. I swallow hard when someone reads, “We know we can seldom keep the precious gift of sobriety unless we give it away,” and, “carry the AA message to those who don’t know there’s a way out.” My tears fall onto the pages of my “Twelve and Twelve.”

As I try to regain composure, an overwhelming feeling comes over me. I call it grace. It feels like the whole room becomes still. “Each group has but one primary purpose.” That empty chair in the middle of the room is hope for the next sufferer who stumbles in broken. I can see emptiness and longing in the eyes of the alcoholic who might sit there. I want to tell that woman back at my earlier meeting, “I see you, and this is your seat. Please sit! Rest and be comforted by us. Lean into the warmth of our experience, strength and hope.” Two principles come to my mind as I write this. I call them the twin principles: Humility and responsibility. They help bring me back and make me right-sized. My seat in AA is not a throne but hopefully a space of humility and responsibility. It has also taken me to a place of self-forgiveness. God works in a wondrous way. I’m a work in Progress.

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Living Grace Group & Ocala Sobriety Online 3rd Annual Picnic at the Park



May 27th 2:00-4:00pm

Baseline Trailhead Park Pavilion #1

4803 SE 58th Ave #44379

Ocala, FL 34472

Speaker: Jimmy Z Food & Drinks

Bring a dish if possible (Dessert or Sides)



District 14 Archives presents

Women in AA

Lighting

The Way

June 10th ≈ 4:00-8:30pm

Foundation's Day Celebration

Main Speaker: Carson F \$5 in advance \$10 at the door

Trinity United Methodist 4000 NW 53rd Ave, Gainesville, FL



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.

Hoping each month for sharing. 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



Birthdays

Contributions

April

MAY

Breakfast Club

Robin B—5
 Frank C—10
 Jay B—29
 Bill H 42

Headstart

Clint E — 1
 Jacqui D—2
 Vanessa—2
 John—3
 D H—9
 David S—20
 Jay B—29

Living Sober

Art S—4
 Steve H—26
 Ken C—31

On Awakening

Sam D—9

ODAT

Mike P—1
 Bob M—13
 Rich T—40
 Bill B—45

We Give Up

Bob S—40



Congrats!!!

Anonymity	\$ 8 4.44
Belleview Speaker	\$ 100.00
Birthday Club	\$ 27.00
Faithful Fivers	\$ 5.00
Free To Be	\$ 140.00
Happy, Joyous & Free	\$1,533.19
Headstart	\$ 153.57
Individual	\$ 173.94
Living Grace	\$ 65.00
Living Sober	\$ 200.00
Lunch Bunch	\$ 175.57
Paypal	\$ 10.00
Rule 62	\$ 120.00
Sundae Social Group	\$ 150.00

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 May for June 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**  
 Area 14, Panel 73 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**