



Special holiday edition

H.O.W.

HONESTY OPEN-MINDEDNESS WILLINGNESS



Monthly Publication of the Indian River Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous

Volume 38 Issue 12

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The HOW is published to improve communication between local AA groups and encourage the participation of AA members in service and activities. You can email anniversaries, meeting updates or changes, and announcements for the good of AA as a whole to aairehow@yahoo.com

TRADITION 12: "We of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of Anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him Who presides over us all."

AA Christmas greeting, from Bill W. 1944.
TO ALL MEMBERS
Greetings On Our 10th Christmas
1944

Yes, it's in the air! The spirit of Christmas once more warms this poor distraught world. Over the whole globe millions are looking forward to that one day when strife can be forgotten, when it will be remembered that all human beings, even the least are loved by God, when men will hope for the coming of the Prince of Peace as they never hoped before.

But there is another world which is not poor. Neither is it distraught. It is the world of Alcoholics Anonymous, where thousands dwell happily and secure. Secure because each of us, in his own way, knows a greater power who is love, who is just, and who can be trusted.

Nor can men and women of AA ever forget that only through suffering did they find enough humility to enter the portals of that New World.

How privileged we are to understand so well the divine paradox that strength rises from weakness, that humiliation goes before resurrection; that pain is not only the price but the very touchstone of spiritual rebirth.

Knowing it's full worth and purpose, we can no longer fear adversity, we have found prosperity where there was poverty, peace and joy have sprung out of the very midst of chaos.

Great indeed, our blessings!

And so,-- Merry Christmas to you all-- from the Trustees, from Bobbie and from Lois and me.
Bill Wilson

STEP 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our af-



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CONCEPT 12 short form: The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government; that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.



Twelve Tips on Keeping Your Holiday Season Sober and Joyous

Holiday parties without liquid spirits may still seem a dreary prospect to new A.A.s. But many of us have enjoyed the happiest holidays of our lives sober—an idea we would never have dreamed of, wanted, or believed possible when drinking. Here are some tips for having an all-round ball without a drop of alcohol.



1 Line up extra A.A. activities for the holiday season. Arrange to take newcomers to meetings, answer the phones at a clubhouse or central office, speak, help with dishes, or visit the alcoholic ward at a hospital.



2 Be host to A.A. friends, especially newcomers. If you don't have a place where you can throw a formal party, take one person to a diner and spring for the coffee.



3 Keep your A.A. telephone list with you all the time. If a drinking urge or panic comes—postpone everything else until you've called an A.A.



4 Find out about the special holiday parties, meetings, or other celebrations

given by groups in your area, and go. If you're timid, take someone newer than you are.



5 Skip any drinking occasion you are nervous about. Remember how clever you were at excuses when drinking? Now put the talent to good use. No office party is as important as saving your life.



6 If you have to go to a drinking party and can't take an A.A. with you, keep some candy handy.



7 Don't think you have to stay late. Plan in advance an "important date" you have to keep.



8 Worship in your own way.



9 Don't sit around brooding. Catch up on those books, museums, walks, and letters.



10 Don't start now getting worked up about all those holiday temptations. Remember—"one day at a time."



11 Enjoy the true beauty of holiday love and joy. Maybe you cannot give material gifts—but this year, you can give love.



12 "Having had a . . ." No need to spell out the Twelfth Step here, since you already know it.





Helping Others Survive the Holidays

Staying sober—and even enjoying yourself—during the holidays

Before I came to AA, my life was without a clear focus and lacked good orderly direction. Since coming to AA, I have adopted my favorite line in the Big Book as a guiding principle in my life. That line is found on page 77 and goes like this: “Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.” This principle goes against my old, negative nature, which was based on self, self, self—selfish, self-centered, self-seeking. My new, positive nature is based in my own AA experience that was brought about by applying the principles of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in my life in a practical way. The holiday season provides excellent opportunities to be of maximum service to God by being helpful to new people in AA.

The holidays can be a tricky time for the newly sober. Holidays are traditionally a time for families to get together. Many AAs, especially newer members, have tension in their family relationships or may even be alienated from them. This can magnify the feeling of loneliness. Loneliness can lead to trouble.

Non-AA family simply don’t relate to us like the AA family can. Sometimes I need to get away from my non-AA kin in order to have my attitude adjusted with the help of my AA friends. An AA meeting is a warm, comfortable, and safe place. Newcomers may need a break from family. All AA members need a place where they can feel comfortable sober.

One of the best ways I can be of service during the holidays is to share my experience, strength, and hope on an individual basis with people new to AA. Here’s what I do:

- Attend meetings on holiday days.
- Keep an eye out for new people.
- Reach out to check in with them.
- Ask them if the holidays have been a hard time for them in the past.
- Ask if they have a plan to stay sober through the holidays.
- Offer to help them make a plan.
- Suggest meetings to attend.
- Know the AA activities that are planned in our area.
- Specifically invite new people to join in.
- Let them know where I’ll be.

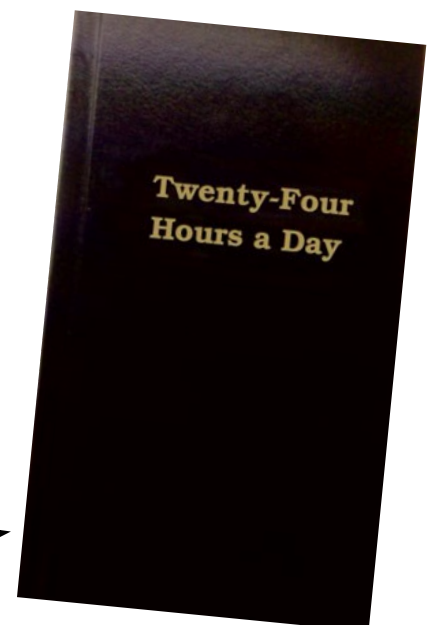
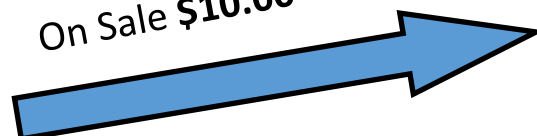
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AT THE CENTRAL OFFICE

“24Hours A Day”

Regularly \$15.00

On Sale \$10.00



2019-2020 ALKATHONS



SEBASTIAN (NORTH COUNTY) SCHEDULE

Location: Sebastian Community Center

1805 N. Central Avenue (Behind Ay Alisco)

Tuesday December 24—9am to Wednesday December 25—4 pm

Tuesday December 31, 2019 9am to Wednesday January 1, 2020 4pm



VERO BEACH (SOUTH COUNTY) SCHEDULE

INDIAN RIVER CENTRAL OFFICE, Inc.



HOLIDAY ALCOTHON

Date	Start	End	GROUP NAME
12/24	4pm to 6pm		Vero Beach Group
	6pm to 8pm		O.D.A.A.T.
	8pm to 10pm		Vero Beach Men
	10pm to Midnight		Candlelight
12/25	Midnight to 2am		I Am Responsible
	2am to 4am		South Vero
	4am to 6am		Noontime Recovery
	6am to 8am		Indian River Men
	8am to 10am		Meat & Potatoes
	10am to Noon		Magnolia
	Noon to 2pm		Quitin' Time
	2pm to 4pm		Royal Palm

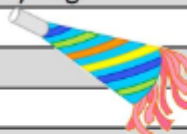
Hourly Meetings at the Half Hour

NEW YEAR ALCOTHON



	Start	End	GROUP NAME
12/31	4pm to 6pm		Meat & Potatoes
	6pm to 8pm		Quitin' Time
	8pm to 10pm		O.D.A.A.T.
	10pm to Midnight		Vero Beach Men
1/1	Midnight to 2am		Early Risers
	2am to 4am		Noontime Recovery
	4am to 6am		Indian River Men
	6am to 8am		Indian River Thursday Night
	8am to 10am		I Am Responsible
	10am to Noon		Vero Beach Group
	Noon to 2pm		Candlelight
	2pm to 4pm		South Vero

Hourly Meeting at the Half Hour



Continued from page 3

The AA program and fellowship are made up of powerful, life changing principles and people. I can be of service by offering hope. Hope comes from seeing people who have the same problem I have, who've found a way to overcome it, and are willing to share the solution with me. Maybe, just maybe, if I do the things they have done it will work for me, too. It is my desire to be a conduit for this message.

This offer is valid year-round but is especially important during the holiday season. This service I can provide of being a lifeline to a newcomer may be a gift to them during the holidays, but I definitely know that it is a blessing to me. When I am doing what I believe God wants me to be doing, I feel useful and whole and there is little danger of me drinking again. Not only can we survive the

holidays, we can actually even enjoy them by taking an interest in the continued sobriety of a newcomer.

- Ask them about their plans for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve.
- Invite new people to celebrate the holidays with my family.

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-- Steve H.

Minneapolis, Minn.

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Toys For Tots Event
Join us Saturday, December 21st
Spaghetti Dinner
5:30pm – 7:00pm at the Newport Club
Admission: an unwrapped toy for a child of any age

On Sunday, December 22nd from 10am-12pm
Active AA members, who are in need this Christmas Season are welcome to come “shop” for their children.
There is no cost to you. Let us help you make this Christmas special for your children!

Bicycles, Toys, Games, Dolls, Stocking Stuffers!!
Wrapping paper, bows, name tags, ribbons, scissors etc. will be accepted at the Newport Club.

Volunteers will be needed for Saturday and Sunday.
If you would like to help, please call:
Trish – 772-713-6068, Ashlei – 772-581-6416 or

Not too much to ask



A member reminds us that it never hurts to be kind, patient and accepting of one another

On July 18, 1987, I came to the end of the road. No hope. No awareness. Nowhere to go. A bench warrant had been issued for my arrest because I had not appeared in court for sentencing.

I checked into a hospital rehab, hoping it would shield me from arrest. The second night in rehab a Hospitals & Institutions panel came to bring an AA meeting to the facility. A young African-American man was on the panel. He was considerably younger than I was, but as I listened to him, I realized he was telling my story. I identified.

After the meeting, I asked him to be my sponsor. I was so desperate and in need of help, I was willing to commit to anything if it meant someone offering real help. I did not ask questions. I was not concerned at that time with the ethnic or racial makeup of AA.

Upon discharge from the rehab program, my sponsor picked me up. I didn't have anyplace to go, so he took me to a mission for the homeless in downtown Los Angeles. Later that day, he took me to an AA meeting, which was part of a larger home group. Only a few African Americans were in the meeting, but one of them was a friend I had known for about 20 years. I felt very comforted upon seeing him there. I thought there must be many more African Americans who needed sobriety, but they must be across town where most lived. Still, I didn't ask why that was.

As days, weeks and years passed, I participated in "marathon meetings" held around holidays at clubhouses in primarily African-American communities. I could feel and see some separation between white and African-American AA members. Also, the large majority of white Americans from my home group never attended the marathon meetings in the black community.

After a while I did finally begin to ask questions about race in AA. As more years passed, I began to sponsor men, especially black men who came to my home group, where they found it more comfortable to stay.

Occasionally, one of my sponsees has come to me with a complaint about hearing an inappropriate black joke and sometimes about someone who actually uses the "N word." I always have a talk with the offending person's sponsor.

To me, it's always important to remind my sponsees why they are in AA—*sobriety*. I also remind them why they are in our particular home group—*sobriety*.

I have shared with white members of my home group that they do not have to tell a black joke to somehow demonstrate that they are comfortable with black people. Telling a racial joke or using racial language might make them feel comfortable, but a black newcomer might not be comfortable with that behavior. I haven't found it necessary to tell black jokes or white jokes or listen to such jokes to make friends.

I'm sober a while now and my perspective has been tempered by time. What used to bother me doesn't bother me now. My gratitude for a sober life overrules occasional discomfort caused by a person saying something rude and hurtful. But this is not always possible for a newcomer of any race who hears offensive language. Their lives are still raw. We of AA should be careful about the words we use. To be kind, patient and accepting is not too much to ask in AA.

All of our experiences are different. I see white alcoholics getting sober in black neighborhoods. Today I see black alcoholics getting sober in white neighborhoods. Basically, I see people suffering from alcoholism who get sober in AA. My sponsorship family today looks like the United Nations.

It's my hope that AA will always remain, in the words of our cofounder Bill W., "democratic in action and in spirit."

-- Thomas S.

Inglewood, California

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Why does your group need an IRCO Delegate?

The IRCO has no authority of it's own but derives it from the participating groups. The representative that each group elects is the group's voice to IRCO—Your link to those who maintain and operate the IRCO.



2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair.....Joseph J.
Vice-Chair.....Rocky I.
Treasurer.....John H.
Secretary.....Donald S.

Advisory Committee

Delegate.....John B.
Delegate (Past Chair).....Steve S.
Delegate (Past Chair).....Tim W.

2019 STANDING COMMITTEES

es.....Mitchel K.
Birthday Dinner 2018.....Natalie
Desk Coordinator.....Bill VB
Corrections—Women.....Lorelei G..
Corrections-Men..... Lane

Corporate Documents.....Trish H.
Public Information.....Susan M.
Unity Committee.....Open
Nominating Committee.....Bill VB.
After Hours Phone.....Mindy S.
HOW EditorOPEN
Inventory Control.....John R.
Literature..... Dutch V.
Nominating..... Billie VB
Treatment..... Bobby Z/Clyde K.
Website.....Dutch V.
Where and When.....Maria G.
12 Step List Coordinator.....Trent L.

District 6 Liaison.....JoAnn H.

12 Step Volunteer Application

Name _____

Phone Number _____

Area You would be willing to participate

North County ☐Y ☐N South County ☐Y ☐N

Availability ☐Mon—Fri ☐Weekends ☐Days ☐Evenings

I am willing to: (Please circle all that apply)

Talk to someone over the phone

Take someone to detox*


Talk to someone at their home*

Give rides to AA meetings

Meet someone at a meeting

Other _____

****It is suggested that a person NOT go on a twelfth step call alone to help an alcoholic who is still suffering. Also you should NOT drive a wet drunk to a treatment facility (detox) without having another A.A. member with you. If you circled either of these items, please be sure that you have another member of A.A. hat is willing to go along with you.****



Indian River Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous

1600 26th Street, Suite 6

P.O. Box 1776

Vero Beach, FL 32961

772-562-1114

<http://www.indianriveraa.org>

Indian River Central Office Birthday Plan

This contribution on my #_____A.A. Birthday is my way of saying *thank you* to Central Office for serving the A.A. community in Indian River County.

Contributor: _____

Address: _____

* Group Name: _____

Please indicate whether you want your contribution credited to (a) your group* or (b) anonymously: _____

Make check out to **Indian River Central Office of AA**. Drop off at the Central Office or mail to the address listed below.

1600 26th Street, Suite 6

Vero Beach, FL 32960

Phone: 772-562-1114



Indian River Central Office

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Indian River Central Office (hereafter "IRCO") is to provide AA services within Indian River County, with the primary goal being to carry the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers. It is the mission of the IRCO to keep groups informed about AA activities by newsletter and by maintain a website, answer inquiries for help, provide AA meeting information, maintain an available supply of Conference Approved books and literature, and to provide guidance and support to the IRCO standing committees.

The IRCO shall function within the meaning and intent of the Twelve Traditions and the Guidelines for Intergroup and Central Offices and other guidelines as set forth by the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The IRCO is entirely accountable to the groups it serves and is entirely supported by the voluntary contributions of AA groups within Indian River County.