

# Serenity News

352 360 0960

[aalakesumter.org](http://aalakesumter.org)

May 2026



Serenity News wants and needs your input! Send articles/notices/news/meeting info, jokes, etc. to Intergroup:

[aalakesumter@gmail.com](mailto:aalakesumter@gmail.com)

## Central Office Hours: Tues, Wed & Thurs 10am-2pm

Welcome to the May issue of Sobriety News, the newsletter for and about Lake/Sumter Counties' Central Office, LSCO. This month's theme is: honesty. "The deception of others is nearly always rooted in the deception of ourselves" our founder wrote in a Grapevine article in 1961. And, if you're new, relax — nobody here knows what they're doing either — we've just been doing it longer.

**Step Five:** Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. (Let the cleansing begin...)

**Tradition Five:** Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. (Keep it simple..)

**Concept V:** Throughout our structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration. (No bullies allowed....)



"It's an honest piece."


**HOPE LIVES HERE**  
*A Benefit for Dr. Bob's Home*  
 Proceeds Support Dr. Bob's Home, 855 Ardmore Ave, Akron, OH 44302  
 Dr. Bob Smith, co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous

**Saturday, October 17th, 2026**  
 10 AM—3 PM—Doors Open 9:30 AM  
 Graceway Church  
 10200 Morningside Drive  
 Leesburg, FL 34788

Featuring GAIL L. — ARCHIVIST

- The History of Dr. Bob's Home
- The History of the Writing of the Big Book

Tickets—\$32 Per Person (Use QR code below)  
 INCLUDES BOX LUNCH and DRINK



For more information contact:  
 Andy D. | [awcd07@gmail.com](mailto:awcd07@gmail.com) | (352) 933-8353



# ***As Bill (Saw) It***

Somehow, being alone with God doesn't seem as embarrassing as facing up to another person. Until we actually sit down and talk aloud about what we have so long hidden, our willingness to clean house is still largely theoretical. When we are honest with another person, it confirms that we have been honest with ourselves and with God.

TWELVE AND TWELVE, P. 60

The perverse wish to hide a bad motive underneath a good one permeates human affairs from top to bottom. Tis subtle and elusive kind of self-righteousness can underlie the smallest act or thought. Learning daily to spot, admit, and correct these flaws is the essence of character building and good living.

TWELVE AND TWELVE, PP 94-95

Most of us thought good character was desirable. Obviously, good character was something one needed to get on with the business of being self satisfied. With a proper display of honesty and morality, we'd stand a better chance of getting what we really wanted. But whenever we had to choose between character and comfort, character building was lost in the dust of our chase after what we thought was happiness. Seldom did we look at character building as something desirable in itself. We never thought of making honesty, tolerance, and true love of man and God the daily basis of living.

TWELVE AND TWELVE, PP 71-72

Only God can fully know what absolute honesty is. Therefore, each of us has to conceive what this great ideal may be -- to the best of our ability. Fallible as we all are, and will be in this life, it would be presumption to suppose that we could ever really achieve absolute honesty. The best way we can do is to strive for a better quality of honesty. Sometimes we need to place love ahead of indiscriminate 'factual honesty'. We cannot, under the guise of 'perfect honesty', cruelly and unnecessarily hurt others. Always one must ask, 'What is the best and most loving thing I can do?'

LETTER, 1966

I used to take comfort from an exaggerated belief in my own honesty. My New England kinfolk had taught me the sanctity of all business commitments and contracts, saying, "A man's word is his bond." After this rigorous conditioning, business honesty always came easy; I never flim-flammed anyone. However, this small fragment of readily won virtue did produce some interesting liabilities. I never failed to whip up a fine contempt for those of my fellow Wall Streeters who were prone to shortchange their customers. This was arrogant enough, but the ensuing self deception proved even worse. My prized business honesty was presently

converted into a comfortable cloak under which I could hide the many serious flaws that beset other departments of my life. Being certain of this one virtue, it was easy to conclude that I had them all. For years on end, this prevented me from taking a good look at myself.

GRAPEVINE, AUGUST 1961

Time after time, newcomers have tried to keep to themselves shoddy facts about their lives. Trying to avoid the humbling experience of the Fifth Step, they have turned to easier methods. Almost invariably they got drunk. Having persevered with the rest of the program, they wondered why they fell. We think the reason is that they never completed their housecleaning. They took inventory all right, but hung on to some of the worst items in stock. They only thought they had lost their egoism and fear; they only thought they had humbled themselves. But they had not learned enough of humility, fearlessness and honesty, in the sense we find it necessary, until they told someone else all their life story.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, PP. 72-73

"Honesty with ourselves and others gets us sober, but it is tolerance that keeps us that way. Experience shows that few alcoholics will long stay away from a group because they don't like the way it is run. Most return and adjust themselves to whatever conditions they must. Some go to a different group, or form a new one. In other words, once an alcoholic fully realizes that he cannot get well alone, he will somehow find a way to get well and stay well in the company of others. It has been that way from the beginning of A.A. and probably always will be so."

LETTER, 1943

## ***Points to Ponder***

The steps aren't about perfection, they're about direction.

I spent years avoiding life—turns out life was the cure.

My moral compass spun so much it qualified as a ceiling fan.

Alcohol allowed me to think irrationally and act irresponsibly with confidence.

I used to have all the answers—now I just try not to argue with the questions.

Powerless people don't argue.

# ***We Are Not A Glum Lot***

An alcoholic walks into a bar and orders a drink. The bartender, noticing he's been coming in every day, asks, "Hey, buddy, why do you keep coming back here?"

The alcoholic sighs and says, "Well, I figured if I keep drinking, maybe I'll forget I have a problem."

The bartender nods sympathetically and says, "That's a good plan. But what if you forget you forgot?"

The alcoholic pauses, then grins and says, "Then I'll just have another drink to remind myself I'm in denial!"

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A guy shows up late to his AA meeting, sweating and out of breath.

The leader says, "You're late. Care to explain?"

The guy says, "Sorry, I was on my way here and I passed a bar. I thought about going in, I really did... but I stayed strong. I kept walking."

The leader smiles. "That's wonderful! That's exactly the kind of willpower we talk about here."

"Thanks," the guy says. "It only took me four trips past it."

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A man has been sober for a year and gets his chip at the AA meeting. Everyone claps, his sponsor is beaming with pride.

Afterward, his sponsor asks, "So how do you feel?"

The man thinks for a moment and says, "Honestly? Terrible. I'm anxious, I can't sleep, I'm irritable, I have to actually deal with my emotions..."

His sponsor nods. "That's all completely normal. It gets better."

The man says, "Oh I know. I just finally understand why I started drinking in the first place."

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At a party someone noticed I wasn't drinking. They came up to me and asked "Why don't you drink?" "Oh, I went pro and retired early" I replied.

## **The Newcomer Mind**

By Jim L.

The newcomer sat next to his sponsor at an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, nervously bouncing his knee while someone shared at the podium. He was only a week sober, and everything felt urgent. Every sentence sparked a question. Every silence felt like something he was supposed to fill. Halfway through the meeting, he leaned over and whispered, "What does that mean—when he says he turned it over?" His sponsor shifted slightly.

The newcomer braced himself. In his anxious, hyper-alert state, what he *heard* was: "Shut up, you insignificant pissant! Take the cotton out of your ears, stick it in your mouth, sit there and shut up! You've got nothing to say and we've got nothing we need to hear from you!"

He recoiled, cheeks burning. Of course... he was talking too much...asking dumb questions.... being annoying. The rest of the meeting he stared at the floor, humiliated and silent.

A year later, after picking up a chip and thanking that same sponsor for his patience, the story came up again. Laughing, he confessed what he thought he'd heard that night.

Come to find out what the sponsor actually said then was 'SHH!'"

# April Donations

Group	Donation
11th Step Meditation	\$115.00
Anonymous	\$80.00
As Bill Sees It	\$163.00
Each Day a New Beginning	\$153.30
Happy, Joyous & Free	\$200.00
Joy of Living	\$125.00
Keep It Simple	\$11.10
Lady Lake Sunday Breakfast	\$547.50
New Attitudes	\$150.00
New Beginnings Group	\$120.00
No Name Big Book	\$117.38
Noon Serenity Seekers	\$586.84
Phoenix Big Book	\$400.00
Pig on the Counter	\$45.00
REBOS in Leesburg	\$70.00
Serenity Sisters	\$71.56
Sober Sisters	\$50.05
Step Sisters	\$298.50
Stepping Stones	\$150.00
Take It Easy Womans	\$164.50
Triangle Breakfast	\$20.00
Triple Crown	\$235.00
Tuesday Beginners	\$450.00
Turning Point Meeting	\$349.88
Your Place	\$56.00
<b>Total April Donations</b>	<b>\$4,729.61</b>

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Honesty without compassion is hostility.

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Before recovery, I had two speeds: dishonest and technically true.

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Nothing humbles you faster than hearing your own excuses come out of a newcomer's mouth.

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# Intergroup Meeting Attendees

## April 2026

- Daily Reflections
- Each Day a New Beginning
- Good Orderly Direction
- Happy Hour
- Joy of Living
- New Beginnings
- No Name Big Book
- Our Primary Purpose
- Serenity Seekers 2
- St Tim's Beginners
- Step Sisters
- Sunday @ 7
- Today's Woman
- Triangle Breakfast
- Virtual Sisters
- You're Eligible Too
- Little Red book
- Take It Easy Men's
- B.Y.O.B.
- Back 2 Basics 2

CS317731



"As we all know, the appearance of honesty is the best policy...."

## The Hardest Person to Be Honest With

I know now that my alcoholism thrived in secrecy. The disease distorted my perception, convincing me that my drinking was manageable, justified, or nobody else's business. Breaking through that denial was not a gentle process — it was one of the hardest things I have ever done.

AA taught me that honesty must travel in three directions: toward myself, toward others, and toward something greater than myself, however I chose to define that. Each presented its own challenge. Being honest with myself meant dismantling years of carefully constructed defenses. Being honest with others required a vulnerability I wasn't sure I had — the courage to risk judgment and still keep talking. Being honest with a higher power asked for a humility that every proud, stubborn part of me resisted.

I came to sobriety through a brutal personal reckoning — a moment when the gap between who I was and who I pretended to be became impossible to sustain any longer. What I found in AA was a program built not on willpower, but on transparency. Honesty, I learned, is not simply a virtue to aspire to. It is the very mechanism through which recovery becomes possible. Without it, nothing else I was trying to build had anything solid to stand on.

## Honesty as the Foundation of Recovery

At the heart of Alcoholics Anonymous lies a simple but demanding principle that I had to learn the hard way: rigorous honesty. From the very first step — admitting my own powerlessness over alcohol — I was asked to do something that my addiction had long made impossible: tell the truth. Not just to others, but to myself.

For years, deception had been my survival skill. I lied to protect my drinking, to manage my relationships, to avoid consequences. This web of dishonesty ran so deep that I could no longer distinguish truth from self-justification. AA addressed this directly, insisting that half-measures would avail me nothing. The program asked me to take a fearless moral inventory, to admit the exact nature of my wrongs, and to keep taking personal inventory going forward. Honesty, I came to understand, was not a one-time act but a daily practice.

The fellowship itself reinforced this. Meetings became spaces where I could speak openly about shame, failure, and struggle without fear of judgment. Hearing others tell their truth made my own truth easier to bear. The moment I became genuinely honest with myself was the turning point — not just in my recovery, but in my life.

## What I Was Really Hiding

For a long time, I told myself that honesty was something I practiced. I was honest at work, honest with my friends, honest in the ways that counted. What I could not see — what I refused to see — was that every version of honesty I offered to the world had been carefully edited to leave my drinking out of it. I was telling partial truths and calling them the whole story.

AA stripped that away from me, slowly and then all at once. Through the steps, I began to see that my dishonesty wasn't just about hiding bottles or explaining away blackouts. It went deeper than that. I had been dishonest about my feelings, my fears, my resentments, and my needs — for so long that I had stopped noticing. Drinking had been the solution to all of those things I couldn't bring myself to face or name.

Getting honest in the rooms didn't happen overnight. It started with small admissions, things I'd never said out loud to another person. But something shifted each time I spoke a truth I had been carrying alone. The weight changed. I started to feel, for the first time in years, like I was actually present in my own life.

## Learning to Stop Performing

Before AA, I was an expert at managing impressions. I knew exactly what to say, how to appear, which version of myself to present in any given room. I was charming when I needed to be, contrite when it was useful, and always, always in control of the narrative. What I didn't realize was how exhausting it all was — and how completely it was killing me.

One of the things AA gave me was permission to stop performing. In the rooms, I met people who had run the same routines I had, told the same lies, worn the same masks. Watching someone else speak with raw honesty about their shame — and seeing them still standing, still accepted, still welcomed — was something I hadn't expected. It made honesty feel survivable.

I won't pretend I got it right immediately. There were shares I dressed up, steps I rushed through without fully meaning the words. But the program is patient, and so were the people in it. Over time, honesty stopped feeling like exposure and started feeling like relief. I had spent so many years being someone I wasn't. Learning to simply tell the truth turned out to be the most radical thing I ever did for myself.

# Wisdom

## By Butch D.

It's been said, the difference between knowledge and wisdom is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is knowing not to cut one into a fruit salad. That idiom works with the first step.

Woody H, an old timer was speaking at a meeting and said, "For years when I went out over, and over again. I KNEW the first step. Hell, I could damn near recite the pages in the 12x12. Yet, I couldn't stay sober for years." He chuckled ironically. "Right up to my last drunk at 45 years old, I knew I couldn't pick up a drink. But, there'd I be pulling into the beverage store after work. See, I had myself convinced that I was just picking up a quart of beer. Go home, drink it while I cut the grass, play with the kids, eat dinner, watch TV until it was time to go to bed!" He let out roar while shaking his head laughing. "Not one single time was that how the scene played out. BUT, I swear to my higher power that I believed it every single time to the age of 45, and my last drunk." He smiled, "And, yes sir. My last drunk started with a quart of beer from my old favorite beverage store."

"See, I finally got a sponsor who taught me what wisdom really means. 'A wise outlook, plan, or course of action!' He nodded, "And that was what we did started a course of action!" He added, "And that course started with the FIRST step!"

"My sponsor opened The Webster's Dictionary, and pointed to the word wisdom and pointed to the noun common sense and good judgment!"

He nodded and ended, "It was a course of action, and good judgment that led to me being 45 years sober! I'm Woody H, and I'm an alcoholic."

## Thoughts on Honesty

Honesty is more than just telling the truth—it's the foundation of recovery. Before we found the rooms, many of us were experts at bending reality, hiding

from ourselves, and polishing half-truths until they looked like something we could live with. But sobriety has a way of clearing the fog. It asks for something simple, but not easy: rigorous honesty.

This month, we explore what it means to live honestly—not just in meetings, but in our thoughts, our relationships, and our daily actions.

Step One asks us to admit the truth: we are powerless over alcohol and our lives have become unmanageable. That admission is often the first honest thing we've said in a long time.

Step Four takes it further: a "searching and fearless moral inventory." That's not about beating ourselves up—it's about facing facts. When we put pen to paper and stop editing the story, something shifts. The truth, even when uncomfortable, becomes a doorway instead of a burden.

"I used to think honesty meant not getting caught. If nobody knew, it didn't count. In early sobriety, I realized I was still lying—mostly to

myself. I'd say I was 'fine' when I wasn't. I'd say I didn't care when I did.

One day, in a meeting, I just said it: 'I'm not okay.' It wasn't dramatic, but it was real. And for the first time, I felt relief. Nobody judged me. They nodded. That's when I understood—honesty isn't about perfection, it's about connection."

### Honesty in Action

Saying "I don't know" instead of pretending  
Admitting when we're struggling instead of isolating  
Being accountable for our actions, even when it's uncomfortable

Letting go of the need to control how others see us  
Honesty doesn't always feel good in the moment—but it builds a life that does.

### Practical Tip of the Month

Try a simple honesty check at the end of the day:

Was I truthful with others?

Was I honest with myself?

Did I avoid something I needed to face?

No judgment—just awareness. *That's where change begins.*