



SARA-MANA INTERGROUP NEWSLETTER

August 2018

Central Office 941.351.4818

AA HELPLINE 941.951.6810

aasrq.org

Do Not Be Discouraged

The AA Big Book contains much profound knowledge and ethereal wisdom, painstakingly garnered from the founders of AA, our beloved Dr. Bob and Bill Wilson, along with many of their very first beneficiaries, men and women who struggled with alcoholism. Some of whom “got it” and stayed sober...and others who, well, didn’t. Yet in my many readings of our Big Book over the years, perhaps my four favorite words are “Do not be discouraged”, found in How It Works, almost universally read at the beginning of our AA meetings.

With a few 24 hours of sobriety now accumulated, I am gifted with the ability to look back on my path to sobriety. Oft times, when a newcomer creeps into a meeting, battered, bruised and beaten almost impossibly low spiritually, physically, mentally and emotionally by our disease, it takes me immediately back to when against all odds, I found AA or AA found me.

My memories of those first months of early sobriety are still vivid beyond description, and I fervently hope that they remain forever so. More than half dead physically, weighing 82 pounds, I was like a victim of a brutal, totally vicious prison camp, which in a very real way, I had been in for just slightly over two years. I emerged from the imprisonment of my deadly disease so brain damaged and destroyed spiritually and mentally that, for many meetings, I was unable to understand and even more so, comprehend, what took place in the meetings I “attended”. For weeks, as I did my best to attend 90 meetings in 90 days, I sat gripping the sides of the chair I’d collapsed into so fiercely that sweat ran down my arms and dripped onto the floor.

My mind so annihilated by my drinking, I thought that unless I pinned myself to the chair, I would jump up, stagger out of the meeting and run headlong into oncoming traffic. I was convinced that no matter how many sober alcoholics were in that meeting or out “there” in the world, whatever the program of AA had offered them, it simply could not...would not...work for me. “You’re too far gone, hopeless beyond redemption” ran endlessly through my mind unless I was asleep.

The damage I inflicted upon my mind and body from alcohol was so great, I sat through meetings as though a foreign language was being spoken. Words jumbled around my brain, making no sense whatsoever. Although I had a “big” Big Book, printed in large type for the visually impaired, I, who had been a voracious reader since first learning to read, was unable to make sense of the words on the pages. Letters jumped around, lines wavered and wandered, and I could not make out many of the words, let alone understand what was being read.

Four or five months into my journey toward sobriety, while attending a Big Book study in the only basement meeting in Florida, we happened to be reading Chapter 5, “How It Works”. I struggled mightily to focus on words being read, when a tiny sentence fell upon my ears and brain almost simultaneously: “Do Not Be Discouraged”. My frightened, hopelessly confused spirit lifted a bit for a moment, and I latched onto those four little words like the lifeline they were.

Do Not Be Discouraged, those simple four words, carried me through many more weeks and months of my very rocky early recovery to deliver me to the 24 hours of sobriety I enjoy today. I’ve been taught that my daily reprieve from alcoholism is based upon my spiritual fitness, the grace and mercy of the God of my understanding and the program and members of AA. However, without the strength and hope contained in those four little words, I never would have had the courage and faith to achieve the sobriety for which I am so grateful today.

by Sam H.

Meeting Space Available!

Emanuel United Methodist Church

Our friends at Emanuel United Methodist Church, 5115 Cortez Road, have space for AA Meetings. Please contact Tracy Ashley at 941-792-3497

Why Isn't This Working?

-- Ross J.

Recently, I witnessed a person in early sobriety who was frustrated that things weren't getting better, a sense of frustration that other alcoholics in early sobriety have shared. We've made the decision to end the pain and suffering, and we drag ourselves into the rooms of AA. After a short time, we begin to wonder if the pain will ever stop. Will it ever get better? Why isn't this working?

I likened early sobriety to a train wreck. We're in the engine, looking ahead at seemingly clear, open tracks. Now, when we turn around, all we can see are wrecked cars following along behind us. Just as safely setting right all of those wrecked cars and moving them out of the way is a major undertaking, so too is the work that we need to do to "...clear away the wreckage of our past."

I was reading my *Daily Reflections* book on August 5th and saw that the entry somewhat spoke to this condition. In part, it reads, "Attending a meeting or calling a fellow A.A. member will usually reduce tension enough to bring relief to a desperate sufferer like me. Sharing problems at meetings with other alcoholics to whom I relate, or privately with my sponsor, can change aspects to the positions in which I find myself. Character defects are identified and I begin to see how they work against me. When I put my faith in the spiritual power of the program, when I trust others to teach me what I need to do to have a better life, I find that I can trust myself to do what is necessary."

This paragraph contains detailed instructions about how to do much of the work of straightening out the train. Attend as many meetings as you can, call other alcoholics, work with your sponsor, develop a relationship with your higher power, and trust in the program and the people guiding you through it. In doing so, we learn to do what is necessary and begin to develop the confidence in ourselves and our program that allows us to sustain this growth on our own.

Remember that despite the fact that you have stopped drinking, you are still the you that you were when you were drinking. Steps 2 through 12 provide the guidance to gradually grow within the program, clear away the wreckage of your past, start setting things right and then regain a measure of self-confidence and self-worth. It works if you work it, one day at a time. Redemption and freedom from daily pain and suffering will gradually become a reality. If you stick it out and honestly commit yourself to doing the work, you'll see improvement in your life the same way that you drank: One day at a time. Please don't quit before the miracle happens.

August AA Milestones

1879: Dr. Bob is born in St. Johnsbury, VT.

1939 Sister Ignatia and Dr. Bob admit the first alcoholic to St. Thomas Hospital in Akron.

1945 *Grapevine* carries its first article by Bill W. "Modesty, One Plank for Good Public Relations" marked the beginning of the work to establish the 12 Traditions.

1952 Richmond Walker publishes *24 Hours a Day*.



Back of the Book

The First Step

--Edgar C.

Bill Wilson felt that the personal stories in the back of the book were its most important part. His point is supported by this excerpt from "Listening to the Wind," page 458, fourth edition:

"The First Step showed me that I was powerless over alcohol and anything else that threatened my sobriety or muddled my thinking. Alcohol was only a symptom of much deeper dishonesty and denial."



The Helpline Needs Your Help!

We're looking for members to volunteer an hour a week to extend the hand of AA and answer calls to the Sara-Mana Helpline. Calls can be answered from your home or mobile phone. We also need a number of stout volunteers who are willing to be on the 12th-Step call list.

Please contact the Helpline via our website or speak to your Intergroup rep about filling out one of those blue (phone volunteer) or yellow (12th-Step volunteer) cards.

From My Journal

by Nancy B.



Understanding and compassion seem to be the underpinnings of forgiveness; at least, this is true for me as I look at my eventual forgiveness of those I believed to have harmed me. And it has been a long process.

It started with Steps 4 and 8. I worked these steps to the best of my ability in my first year of sobriety, but it now seems, so many 24's later, that I just scratched the surface of the forgiveness that was available.

I don't mean total understanding of what makes the other person tick, or even total understanding of all the complexities that go into my thoughts and choices. Instead, I mean a desire to be understanding about the fact that we all struggle with fears, aspirations, and knowing what is right and that it is possible to find a perspective such as, "If I were in that person's shoes, I might have done the same thing."

Compassion seems to come from a similar perspective. My forgiveness of others has become more real as I've gained compassion for myself.

The Sobriety Group Fridays 7 pm IS MOVING

From 3700 26th St West to
4635 26th St West
Bradenton FL, 34207

Hope Lutheran Church

First meeting in new location:
Friday September 7, 2018

SARA-MANA INTERGROUP DISTRICT IV
Presents
2018 GRATITUDE DINNER

Saturday November 10th, 2018

Sarasota Community Church
4041 Bahia Vista Street
Sarasota, FL 34232

NO SMOKING on CHURCH GROUNDS

5:30PM - Door Open 6:30PM - Dinner 8:00PM - Speaker Jim H. - Largo, FL	Menu Salad Roasted Potatoes Seasonal Veggies Pork Loin Chicken Pasta Primavera Desert Beverages
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RAFFLE - SOBRIETY COUNTDOWN-FOOD-FUN-FELLOWSHIP

Tickets - \$18.00 per person
Available at Central Office
1748 Independence Blvd. Sarasota, FL 34234 (941) 351-4818
or by calling Ron K. (941) 914-2537

Room Max 350 People
To Volunteer Call
Jimmy K. (941) 539-8425
www.aasrq.org

Heard Around the Rooms

We don't want to drink like gentlemen; we want to drink like pigs and be treated like gentlemen.

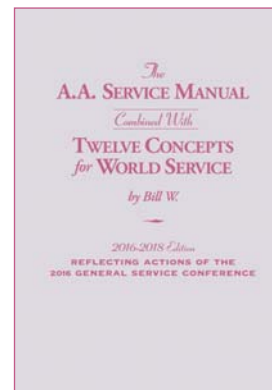
Central Office Book of the Month

SPECIAL \$1 PRICE!

A.A Service Manual / 12 Concepts for World Service

The manual opens with a history of A.A. services and explains the Conference structure and its year-round importance. The Concepts—principles of service that have emerged from A.A.'s service accomplishments and mistakes since its beginning— are set forth by Bill W.

Regular Price \$3.95



ANNIVERSARIES

Groups: Please email birthdays to newsletter@AAsrq.org and put **ANNIVERSARIES** in the subject line. Anniversaries will appear the month after they occur (ie., August anniversaries will appear in the September edition of the newsletter). Deadline for submission of anniversaries is the 7th of each month. So, please have August anniversaries for publication in the September edition submitted by September 7th. Please submit anniversaries typed within the body of an email or a Word file. Unless otherwise noted, anniversaries listed below are for July.

Donut Hour

George S. 30 years
Karen 2 years
Paul N. 38 years

Kensington Park

Brian H. 3 Years
Dave H. 5 years

Monday Night Men's Group

Greg F. 6 years
Larry G. 26 years

The Palmetto Group of AA

Althea H. 25 years
Denny 9 years
Lindsay B. 4 years
Mayland C. 1 year

Pass It On

June
Barbara P. 40 years
Carolyn 4 years

July

Austin L. 13 years
Jim D. 29 years
Maureen G. 10 years

ROSE Group

Debra D. 5 years
Eileen H. 10 years
Maggie R. 4 years

63rd Avenue Group

Rebecca B. 36 years
Robert T. 39 years

Serenity Room

Doug D. 5 years
Doug H. 7 years
Jon N 11 years
Melissa A. 1 year
Rebecca B. 36 years
Tom K. 1 year

Singleness of Purpose

Don Q. 31 years
Doug W. 6 years
Lynn M. 6 years

St. Armand's Noon Group

Dave S. 15 years
Luann L. 39 years
Mitchell G. 10 years

Sunrise Group

Dan L. 4 years
Henry 4 years
Joe F. 8 years
Joe G. 4 years
Keith V. 6 years
Kris K. 2 years
Larry W. 13 years
Michael T. 14 years
Ray L. 17 years
Ron W. 32 years
Susie W. 19 years

Third Legacy Group

Craig B. 3 years
Landon S 3 years
Reid K. 7 years

Carry the Message

Saturday August 25th
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church
7461 Prospect Rd. Sarasota 34243

Literature
H&I
General Service
P/CPC
Archives

Service Oriented - Guest Speaker

Volunteers needed. To join in on the fun contact Mick G. (941) 587-0881 paisley06@gmail.com

Carry the Message

10:00 to 10:15
Welcome, Coffee & Cookies

10:15 to 10:45
Speaker: Simone C.

10:45 to 11:45
Accessibility, Archives, Grapevine, PI/CPC, H&I, Literature, Gen. Serv.

11:45 to 12:15
Speaker: Shirley P.

10 min FAQ

12:30 to 1:45
Pizza & Ice Cream

TO SUBMIT ITEMS TO THE NEWSLETTER: Anniversaries, articles and meeting notices should be sent to newsletter@aasrq.org. Submit material as attachments or placed directly into an email. Include your first name, group and type of item being sent. Deadline is the 7th day of the month. Submissions may be edited for length or content. The opinions expressed herein are those of the writers and not necessarily those of A.A., Sara-Mana Intergroup or the Central Office.

The Sobriety Group

Fridays 7pm



Closed Big Book Meeting

WE'RE MOVING ON UP.....

And Over, just down the street!

From 3700 26th St West to

4635 26th St West

Bradenton FL, 34207

Hope Lutheran Church



(just south of Cortez on 26th St)

Meeting Room #1 in 2 story building on South Side of Church – 1st floor

First meeting in new location:

Friday September 7, 2018