



# SARA-MANA INTERGROUP NEWSLETTER

May 2020

Central Office 941.351.4818

AA HELPLINE 941.951.6810

aasrq.org

## Improving Accessibility in the Rooms and Online

### MY STORY

by Marcus E.

I am a member of the Fellowship of A.A. Seven years ago, due to a unfortunate accident I had a stroke and severe brain bleed. It left me bound to a wheelchair, paralyzed on my whole right side, with severe vision problems and a speech impediment. I was not likely to survive, but my Higher Power had other plans – as He does for all His children.

Before my accident, my sponsor and my service sponsor introduced me to and guided me through the world of Service, one of our Three Legacies (Recovery, Service and Unity). I was grateful to walk the "Road of Happy Destiny." Today, my path of service is limited – I can only speak of my Experience, Strength, and Hope – and I now belong on the other side, those receiving help.

Yet I am not the only member of this wonderful Fellowship who faces changes and challenges. There are many who are affected in other ways, blind, deaf or hard of hearing, born without or through some tragedy have lost a limb or two. One leg, one arm. The list could go on and on.

In the past, I was part of what we then called, "Special Needs Committee" under the umbrella of District 4, General Service. All members of A.A. with some sort of disability, including me, have experienced meeting rooms and church halls with no accessible ramps, bathrooms that don't accommodate wheelchairs, and other obstacles to recovery.

Is it our business to tell a church to fix their building and offer a solution? NO. But under the leadership of the Accessibilities Committee we can each do our part. For example, our groups and meetings can ask that an accessibility icon be placed in the "Where and When" to share the fact that this Fellowship Hall is wheelchair accessible. But there is so much more that we can do to foster Unity and allow to share their story and share in Experience, Strength and Hope of others.

We are going through challenging and frightening times. With this virus upon us, Zoom meetings have become a sure way to see and hear other fellow members.



The spread of Zoom meetings has been a blessing to our Fellowship, and the Accessibilities Committee feels it can be used after the pandemic as a new ongoing 'tool' to reach all in need

The goal is to develop several standing Zoom meetings to serve those members of AA who are house bound, no longer drive, and face other physical obstacles to attending meetings. Our Trusted Servant and Accessibilities Committee Chair, Jeanne, feels we can grow in numbers once the Zoom format is established. We have capable members that can help with Zoom technology and lead anyone who needs assistance through the process.

My favorite line in our Big Book is on pages 162 and 163: "Thus we grow...." Read the rest – it is only three sentences long but speaks volumes to me.

### Join the Meeting

Pease join us **every Thursday at 1:00 p.m.**

Meeting ID: 936 715 9901

For more information, assistance setting up Zoom on your phone or computer, and the meeting password, please **email us at [accessibilities@aasrq.org](mailto:accessibilities@aasrq.org)**.



Best of

## Dear Alkie,

"Alkie" is a long-time member of A.A. His comments are based on his own strength, hope, and experience and are not reflections of any official A.A. position or practice.

**Q. Dear Alkie:** With all your sobriety, do you still call your sponsor?

**Alkie:** My sponsor is someone I call to question my answers.

**Q. Dear Alkie:** I'm thinking about joining A.A.--what will it cost me?

**Alkie:** Everything in A.A. is free. The only things you pay for are the suggestions you don't take.

**Q. Dear Alkie:** Why do I need a sponsor? Doesn't your Big Book have a chapter which tells you "How It Works"?

**Alkie:** The Big Book outlines How It Works, but I needed a sponsor to show me how to work it.

**Q. Dear Alkie:** I'm new to A.A. Will I someday sponsor other people?

**Alkie:** Those who work with others evidence their generosity of spirit; those who don't are cheating themselves of the most rewarding aspect of the program.

**Q. Dear Alkie:** Are there any rules to sponsorship?

**Alkie:** "Help others if you can; and if you can't, at least don't do any harm." The Hippocratic oath also pertains to sponsorship.

**Q. Dear Alkie:** I'm new to A.A., and just got a sponsor. Now what?

**Alkie:** Your mind is not your friend, so run your ideas by one who is--- your sponsor!

**Q. Dear Alkie:** My program isn't working. How do you do it so well?

**Alkie:** If your program isn't working, try A.A.'s.

**Q. Dear Alkie:** I don't believe that God will help me--what should I do?

**Alkie:** Feed your faith, and your doubts will go to any length... Going to any length... starve.



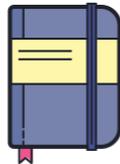
## Akron Area Intergroup Council to Hold Special Two-Day Virtual Founders' Day Event

June 13 – 14, 2020

For more information and to register for this free event, visit [www.foundersday.org](http://www.foundersday.org)

## From My Journal

-- by Nancy B.



One of the new frames of reference I learned to adopt from Steps 4 and 8 was my part in every disturbance, resentment, anger, hurt and fear.

My sponsor and the AA program kept urging me to stay away from blaming others and to look at my contribution to the situation.

Therein always lay the solution. I learned that the only thing I had the power to change was me! In changing me and using my new frame of reference, I no longer get into swamps of messy relationships and situations of conflict. I now know to let go of self-centered thoughts when they first get started in my head. Doing so helps a lot to keep my side of the street clean.

I've also been learning not to judge the other person, a topic I could write pages on as well. Accepting others, with compassion, prevents me from focusing on perceived wrongs others might have done and keeps the focus on my choice to do the next right thing.

## Meeting Guide



WHERE & WHEN



WHERE & WHEN



# State Convention Rescheduled for 2021



For the health, safety and convenience of our fellowship, the 2020 Florida State Convention in Jacksonville has been rescheduled for August 5-8, 2021. It will still be held at the Hyatt. The hotel has canceled all room reservations and we will be receiving a link soon that will allow you to make room reservations for next year. If you had registered for the convention, purchased banquets, ice cream social, etc., they will all be honored next year.

Should you not be able to attend the convention in 2021, and would require a refund, we kindly ask that you "pay it forward" by donating your registration to our scholarship fund which will enable a member of our fellowship to attend who otherwise couldn't afford to go. If you are unable to donate your registration and need a cash/credit refund you will have until June 13th 2020 to make that request to treasurer2020fsc@gmail.com. There will be a \$5.35 processing fee. Donations to the scholarship fund can also be made by contacting treasurer2020fsc@gmail.com. All other registrations not refunded/donated will be rolled over to 2021.

This was a tough decision, we were ready to host a great convention but God had other plans. We look forward to A FANTASTIC convention next year and seeing all of you then. More information to come in the next several weeks relative to updating the website, our flyers, etc. and getting those who weren't already registered, registered for August 5-8, 2021. Thank you for your patience while we got all of this worked out with the hotel, they were incredibly accommodating.

Doug J.  
Chair, 64th FSC 2021

## We Are not a Glum Lot

The chairman of a long-time meeting asked his visiting speaker, "What topic were you thinking of emphasizing?"  
"Step Three."  
"Might not be such a good idea," said the chairman. "If folks here want to hear about God, they go to church."  
"Well, how about taking inventory and making amends?"  
"Nah. Folks here like to feel good. Thinking about character defects and digging up the past, that only makes 'em blue, and starts spats between husbands and wives."  
"Then, what topic can I use?" cried the exasperated speaker.  
"Well, we usually just talk about our AA program."

## From the Archives ...

### Marty Mann

*Considered one of the first female members of AA and the author of "Women Suffer Too"*

Marty Mann was born into an upper middle-class family in Chicago. She attended private schools, traveled extensively, and was a debutante. She married a wealthy New Orleans man, and he was her equal in heavy drinking. The marriage was short. After her divorce, her drinking increased steadily over the next few years. Her social and family connections made it easy for her to launch a career in public relations. Mann's drinking grew to the point where it endangered her business and her life. Before her 30th birthday she attempted suicide twice.

Dr. Harry Tiebout, her psychiatrist, gave her a manuscript of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1939 and persuaded her to attend her first AA meeting. She said, "I went trembling into a house in Brooklyn filled with strangers, and I found I had come home at last – to my own kind." Despite several relapses during her first year and a half, Mann succeeded in becoming sober by 1940 and, apart from a brief tumble nearly twenty years later, she remained sober for the rest of her life.

In 1945, Mann began working actively to eliminate the stigma and ignorance regarding alcoholism, particularly for women. She wanted to encourage the "disease model" which viewed it as a medical/psychological problem rather than a moral failing. She helped start the Yale School of Alcohol Studies (now at Rutgers) and organized the National Committee for Education on Alcoholism (NCEA), which later became the National Council on Alcoholism (today the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence or NCADD). She was also in great demand as a public speaker using her personal experience which made her effective. She was instrumental in educating the public that alcoholism is a serious but treatable disease.

Mann's willingness to admit her alcoholism and her successful experience with AA encouraged others to seek help. Mann contributed the story "Women Suffer Too" to the 2nd and 3rd editions of the Big Book. She wrote about AA sobriety " ...that was the beginning of a new life, a fuller life, a happier life than I had ever known or believed possible".

*With love and service from Leslie B., the archives liaison to the "Plain and Straight" [the newsletter of Pinellas County Intergroup]. A statement about District 1 Archives Committee: Archives service is more than a custodial activity. It is a means by which we collect, preserve and share the rich and meaningful heritage of our fellowship. Visit our dedicated website at [www.district1archives.com](http://www.district1archives.com) to learn more about the Pinellas County Archives Committee.*

*Ed. note: You can check out the Pinellas County Intergroup newsletter, "Plain and Straight," at [www.aapinellas.org](http://www.aapinellas.org)*

# ANNIVERSARIES

Please email birthdays to [newsletter@AAsrq.org](mailto:newsletter@AAsrq.org), put **ANNIVERSARIES** in the subject line, and submit them typed in the body of an email or a Word file. Anniversaries appear the month after they occur (ie., April anniversaries will appear in the May edition). Deadline for submission of anniversaries is the 7th of each month. Unless otherwise noted, the anniversaries appearing here are for April.

<b>Bay Group</b>		<b>St. Armand's Noon</b>	
David S.	8 years	Mike B.	5 years
Don N.	16 years	Molly M.	9 years
<b>Early Big Book</b>		<b>Serenity Room</b>	
Judy M.	33 years	Trudie S.	43 years
Marla H.	33 years		
Sheila D.	34 years		
<b>Down Home</b>		<b>63rd Avenue Group</b>	
Beth A.	1 year	Deborah C.	45 years
Bill W.	46 years	Frankie	26 years
Jean W.	39 years	Jo B.	34 years
Paul N.	13 years	Mary M.	18 years
		Suzanne G.	2 years
		Tim G.	12 years
<b>Oasis</b>		<b>Singleness of Purpose</b>	
<b>March</b>		Marvin C.	12 years
Duke D.	8 years	Mike B.	5 years
Mike M.	53 years	Melody M.	8 years
Mike S.	2 years		
<b>April</b>		<b>Sober Living</b>	
Dave B.	2 years	Maureen C.	30 years
Denise S.	17 years		
Greg M.	1 year		
Lauren H.	2 years		
Michael P.	7 years		
Rene G.	42 years		

# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

## DISTRICT 4 TO HOST QUARTERLY ASSEMBLY



District 4 will be hosting the January 2021 Quarterly Assembly here in Sarasota, January 15-17 at the Hyatt. Taking on an endeavor such as this requires hard work, many hands and the support that we find on a daily basis in the program.

We are in need of AA people to help support the many functions required to pull this off. Please know, you don't have to be a technology wizard, a CPA, a Banquet manager or an organizational guru. We are looking for people who love service, want to give back what was so freely given and help SRQ AA shine by welcoming other AA people from the Area to our lovely town.

If you are remotely interested, please reach out to Jeanne T at [jcdonlan@gmail.com](mailto:jcdonlan@gmail.com) to get additional details and information.

Here is a list of the various Committees we need to fill:

Speaker Committee  
Greeters  
Banquet  
Hospitality

Registration  
Program  
Coffee  
Accessibilities



## GROUP OF THE MONTH

Unfortunately, we received no Group of the Month feature submissions this month, for the third straight month. Remember, we won't have a newsletter to read if no one shares.

We intend the Group of the Month piece to be a fun way to build an even greater sense of AA community in our area. And we've had some terrific contributions from Gulf Gate Noon, the Bay Group, and Monday Nite Men's Group.

If you've enjoyed reading about the groups that make up Sara-Mana AA, please consider submitting 200-300 words to tell us about your group - its history, special events, meeting size, funny stories, how you got your name, etc. Consider it an invitation to AAs everywhere to check out your meeting.

Send the info our way at [newsletter@aasrq.org](mailto:newsletter@aasrq.org) and we'll make your group the Group of the Month!

## AAGRAPEVINE

The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous

Due to the current changing health situation, many AA meetings across the U.S. and Canada are finding it safer to close. To help members during this time, we are giving everyone free access for a limited period to our 2020 Grapevine (Jan through May) and La Viña (Jan/Feb through May/Jun) print issues.

[www.aagrapevine.org/we-are-here-to-help](http://www.aagrapevine.org/we-are-here-to-help)

**TO SUBMIT ITEMS TO THE NEWSLETTER:** Anniversaries, articles and meeting notices should be sent to [newsletter@aasrq.org](mailto: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.