



# SARA-MANA INTERGROUP NEWSLETTER

January 2019

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aasrq.org

## New Officers Elected

**Three familiar faces continue to serve the Sara-Mana Intergroup as officers.**

In September, a nominating committee was formed to identify volunteers willing to stand for election, and elections were held during the November meeting.

The results? Matt (Treasurer) and Brandon (Secretary) were unanimously elected to and kindly agreed to serve a second two-year term in their current positions, while Co-Chair Jim was selected to fill the position of Intergroup Chair. Intergroup thanks all three of these members of our fellowship for their continued service.

## Intergroup Thanks Former Chairman, Doug

We also want to express our deepest gratitude to our outgoing Intergroup Chair, Doug. And who better to put our gratitude into words than his longtime Co-Chair, and new Intergroup Chair, Jim:

*I don't even know where to begin. Doug has done so much for Sara-Mana Intergroup – and AA as a whole. He has gone above and beyond in every aspect, especially considering that he even relocated out of the area but still maintained his position and took care of all his responsibilities. He will be dearly missed as the Intergroup Chair, but I also look forward to having him be our guide as our Current Practices Chair down the road.*

*I have learned so much from sitting next to him these past years and really have great admiration and respect for all that he has done and taught us.*

As Jim mentions, Doug will continue his long history of service by working with the latest Current Practices Chair, Joe, and the new slate of officers as we move forward in 2019. If you're wondering, the Current Practices Chair is a position called for within our Intergroup bylaws, often filled by the most recent Intergroup Chair, to advise on and ensure historical continuity for the workings of Intergroup.

## On Anonymity

-- Ross J.

Most of us know "anonymity" as a particularly hard-to-pronounce word that refuses to roll off of the tongue when we read the 11th and 12th Traditions. Recently, I was in a meeting, and the proposed topic was anonymity. "Okay," I thought to myself, "So we agree that anonymity allows us to open up, share freely and lead an otherwise normal life outside the rooms with no one the wiser. Now, what are we going to talk about for the rest of the meeting?" Well, it turns out that our discussion lasted the entire meeting, and at the end, I'd learned a few things and opened up to a viewpoint that I'd never considered: Anonymity protects the individual, but it also protects the fellowship.

We agreed that anonymity creates "guilt free zones" within our meetings. We can admit our wrong doing and seek to better ourselves without fear of being judged or ostracized. Often times, we find that our deepest, darkest secrets are not nearly as deep and dark as our neighbors' and they have found long-term sobriety, so it should be possible for us.

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## OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE

### Intergroup Co-Chair Needed

We're still in need of a member to serve as Intergroup Co-Chair. **Primary responsibilities:** Attending monthly meetings and leading efforts to put on the annual



Gratitude Dinner. (But don't worry: Our current Chair, Jim, has quite a bit of experience to share, and there are many other seasoned volunteers who are

ready to support another successful event this year!). **Qualifications:** Two years sobriety. And you don't have to be an Intergroup rep! **Find out more:** Talk to your Intergroup rep, email us at [info@aasrq.org](mailto:info@aasrq.org) or come to the monthly meeting (3rd Tues. of the month, 7pm).

# Anonymity

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We typically introduce ourselves using only our first name, and many of us have attended meetings for years with people whom we only know by first name. This works well, but there are circumstances in which it is necessary to know and use a member's last name. One example would be when visiting "Jim" in the hospital. Without a last name, he'd be tough to find.

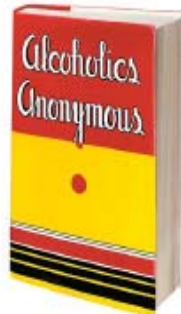
One man in my home group often gives his first and last name during introductions. Most of us would agree that this is his choice. It is his anonymity, after all. He should be able to decide to keep his anonymity or break it, right? This is where the discussion got interesting.

Another person pointed out that this could adversely affect a newcomer and prevent him from continuing in his own recovery. He explained that a newcomer might have finally worked up the courage to come to his first AA meeting, in large part because he had heard that he can be anonymous. He sits down, the meeting starts, and as we are doing introductions, he hears this man state his first and last name. Now he panics! He was expecting anonymity, and here is this person giving out his last name. Is that what is expected? Does he have to give out his last name? Does he stick around to find out? Or does he make a bee line for the door and miss this chance for recovery?

What is the purpose of anonymity? It protects our privacy, but it also protects AA. We've all heard the horror stories about actors and other prominent personalities who stumble into AA and start shouting about it from the roof tops. Then, the individual has an epic fail, and the public thinking is that AA doesn't work and it's full of jackasses like this. We gain our members from attraction, not promotion. In the above example, we have a negative promotion, and that diminishes our attraction.

AA, for the most part, enjoys a solid reputation in the community in large part because we have a strong and proven program of recovery that we quietly nurture and protect. We use the power of public opinion and our group conscience to keep our program on track and to protect the anonymity of the group and its members. And so I learned that the highest purpose of anonymity is to protect AA so that it can continue to be a quiet institution of solace and recovery. After that, we can rely on anonymity to protect us, as we pursue our own sobriety.

Anonymity is a necessary tool in guaranteeing to the newcomer that he can open up in the relative safety in our rooms. Yes, we have the right to protect our own anonymity or to be public about our disease, but our choices can have unexpected effects on others, and it is important to assure them that their anonymity will be protected.



## Back of the Book

### Faith Not Fear

--Edgar C.

One of the key principles of our program is faith in the protection of a Higher Power. Just how that faith came to one of our number is described in the story titled "A Vision of Recovery" (pp 494, Fourth Edition). The author writes,

"I now understand that the spiritual malady should be my main concern and that the more faith I have, the fewer problems I will have. Today I have more faith than I ever had, and as my faith grows, my fears lessen."

## Central Office

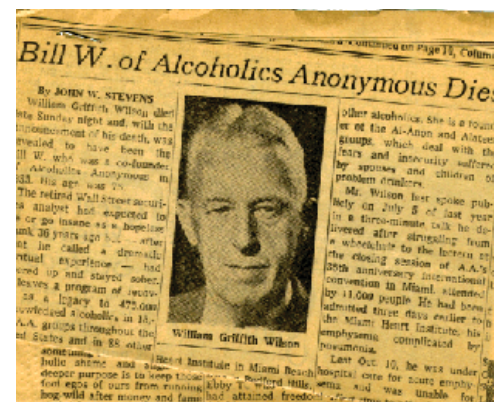
### Thanks

#### Groups & Individuals Contributing this Month

63rd Ave. Group | Bay Group  
Bee Ridge East  
Friday Night in the Wind  
Grupo Hispano Compañeros  
Gulf Gate Noon | Humble Beginnings  
If Group | Islander Group  
Keep It Simple | Keep It Simple Men's  
Language of the Heart  
Lighthouse Group | Lost & Found  
Men and Woman of Serenity  
Monday Night Men's | Oasis Group  
Saturday Night Speakers  
Siesta Key Men's | Sober Living  
St. Armand's Noon | Surfside Serenity  
Traditions Group  
Under The Rainbow  
Anonymous | Carol | John

## This Month in AA History

- 1889 Sister Ignatia is born in Ireland.
- 1915 Dr. Bob marries Ann.
- 1918 Bill W. marries Lois, just days before he leaves for Europe and WWI.
- 1938 New York AA splits from the Oxford Group.
- 1971 Bill W. dies in Miami. *New York Times* publishes his obituary on Page 1.
- 1988 AA in West Virginia starts 1st statewide toll-free hotline.



## Overheard in the Halls

AA is not about whistling a happy tune; it's about accepting a dirge.  
--Mike

# From My Journal

by Nancy B.



These days, thinking of humility as a healer of pain strikes me as a simple truth, a truth that I only learned in sobriety with the help of AA.

When I am right sized, I'm more inclined to think of all of life's terms in a broader perspective and to accept rather than fight them. With this mindset, I pass through the difficulty or challenge more easily and serenely.

When I recognize pain as a signal that I'm trying to control, I'm more inclined to get right sized and look to my HP for guidance – or just hand the situation over. And when I'm particularly on the beam, as I am sometimes with my writing, helping another alcoholic or responding to someone in some kind of emotional crisis or stress, I know that it is my HP working through me and not my ego.

I no longer believe that I have to be right, and when I slip into the old habit of wanting to be right, I can easily accept that I've fallen off the beam – after I recognize what's happening – and substitute a measure of humility.

Life is easier, more serene and more joyful with humility as one of my partners.

## 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: Is there a course you take to become an A.A. member?

**Alkie:** In A.A. no one *tells* you how to live; they *show* you how to live.

**Q.** Dear Alkie: How do I find out if I should join A.A.?

**Alkie:** A person finds their identity by identifying in, not out, because without identification A.A. is just information.

**Q.** Dear Alkie: I've had a slip. Can I still be in A.A.?

**Alkie:** In A.A, we don't shoot our wounded; otherwise, we'd all be dead. Instead, we train them to become better soldiers.

**Q.** Dear Alkie: I've heard a lot about "God's will". Any tips on how I'll know?

**Alkie:** If three people offer you the same advice, it's probably God's will -- or at least good advice!!

**Q.** Dear Alkie: I think you A.A. people are following me--you seem to know all about me!

**Alkie:** Alcoholics already know 85% of everything there is to know about one another before they meet, because to a greater or lesser degree, we've all shared the same feeling and experiences with alcohol. It's only our circumstances that differ.

**Q.** Dear Alkie: What's your success rate in helping others?

**Alkie:** I'm always at least 50% successful at helping others--because I am always helped!

**Q.** Dear Alkie: What have you gotten out of being in A.A.?

**Alkie:** A.A. has given me everything I used to drink for.

## New Year, New You . . .

## New Fund Drive!

That's right. Everyone's favorite annual tradition is back -

### Central Office 2019 Fund Drive

District 4's Central Office serving Sarasota and Manatee Counties is trying to raise \$30K by April 15.

What Does Central Office Do for Us?

- Answers questions about AA.
- Provides a place for a dozen of our AA Service Organizations and Committees to meet.
- Supplies literature and materials to individuals, groups and institutions.
- Assists service committees in their efforts.
- Keeps the whole house warm. (No, sorry, that's central heating.)
- Provides the services necessary for us to accomplish 12th step work.

**Envelopes are available at meetings from your GSR and Intergroup Rep.**

## Responsibility Statement

I am responsible,  
when anyone, anywhere,  
reaches out for help,  
I want the hand of AA  
always to be there,  
and for that  
I am responsible.

## Helpline Chair Needed

Are you looking for an opportunity to serve those reaching out for help in Sarasota and Manatee counties? We're in need of a Helpline Chair to ensure the hand and voice off AA is there when members of the community call. The primary responsibility of the Chair is to ensure that volunteers are in place to answer calls. **If interested, please speak to your Intergroup rep or drop us a line at [info@aasrq.org](mailto:info@aasrq.org).**

Spending Time in  
Your Own Head?

Find a Meeting!



Online at [www.aasrq.org](http://www.aasrq.org)

# ANNIVERSARIES

Groups: Please email birthdays to [newsletter@AAsrq.org](mailto:newsletter@AAsrq.org) and put **ANNIVERSARIES** in the subject line. Anniversaries will appear in the month after they occur (ie., January anniversaries will appear in the February edition of the newsletter). Deadline for submission of anniversaries is the 7th of each month. So, please have anniversaries for publication in the February edition submitted by February 7th. Please also submit anniversaries typed within the body of an email or a Word file.

## Bay Group

*October*  
Chris L. 17 years  
Debbie C. 9 years  
Joe D. 25 years  
Lynne R. 29 years  
Tony T. 37 years

## November

Andi B. 1 year  
Janet B. 2 years  
Paul W. 36 years  
Ron W. 23 years  
Shannon B. 2 years

## December

Kerry S. 37 years  
Peg D. 11 years  
Rip C. 32 years

## Bee Ridge East Group

### November

Greta T. 31 years  
Mary M. 31 years  
Walt M. 30 years

## Donut Hour

### November

Al P. 6 years  
Betty T. 13 years  
Cathy M. 1 year  
Denise F. 1 year  
George H. 17 years  
John C. 26 years  
Kelly C. 1 year  
Ken S. 1 year  
Laci 1 year  
Michael R. 29 years  
Veronica 32 years  
Wendy W. 5 years

### December

Debra P. 13 years  
Joe L. 4 years  
Michelle C. 3 years  
Pat V. 37 years  
Richard C. 2 years  
Samantha D. 1 year

## Down Home Group

### December

Louise 11 years  
Mikel W. 4 years  
Rob D. 4 years

## Early Big Book

Dan P. 6 years  
Gretchen J. 27 years  
Kunell W. 23 years  
Nancy L. 40 years

## Happy Cookie Hour

### November

Danielle S. 1 year  
Jimmy J. 34 years  
Laurie P. 12 years  
Tina C. 1 year

## Kensington Park

### November

Andy B. 1 year  
Bill R. 23 years  
Clarissa Z. 3 years  
John F. 27 years  
Kate D. 10 years  
Paul W. 36 years

### December

Daniel Y. 5 years  
Eddie G. 37 years  
George M. 34 years  
Ryan W. 2 years  
William S. 1 year

## Gulf Gate

### November

Art 29 years  
Chris L. 12 years  
Henry P. 34 years  
Judy G. 3 years  
Maryanne M. 2 years  
Ross W. 4 years  
Susan N. 39 years

## Monday Night Men's Group

### December

Ken S. 4 years  
Mike T. 22 years

## Primary Porpoise

### November

Donald L. 35 years  
Ishmael K. 29 years  
John F. 32 years

### December

Jenny O. 3 years  
Kerry S. 38 years

## Palmetto Group

### November

Chuck N. 31 years  
Claude B. 1 year  
Jim M. 38 years  
Joany L. 2 years  
Marti N. 10 years  
Mitch G. 2 years  
Nelson J. 4 years  
Robert J. 4 years

### December

Dave L. 2 years  
Jay V. 2 years  
Jimmy K. 2 years

## ROSE Group

### November

Liz S. 17 years  
Pamela W. 14 years

### December

Alanna S. 18 years  
Carolyn 1 year  
KC C. 23 years  
Leslie K. 5 years  
Peg 11 years

## Saint Armand's Noon

### November

Dick C. 36 years  
George M. 44 years  
Jerry W. 31 years  
Kathy B. 30 years  
Mary Jane L. 43 years  
Nani M. 7 years

### December

Bob M. 10 years  
Joop V. 28 years  
Lisa M. 11 years  
Pat P. 12 years  
Yolande W. 16 years

## The Serenity Room

### December

Curt M. 16 years  
Dane S. 11 years  
Kathleen C. 1 year  
Nate R. 2 years  
Pete F. 32 years  
Tracey P. 8 years

## Singleness of Purpose

### November

Bob J. 4 years  
Nelson J. 4 years  
Charlie N. 11 years  
Steve S. 10 years

### December

Betty M. 36 years  
Jim F. 22 years  
Linda J. 35 years  
Sai M. 8 years  
Tom W. 7 years

## The Sunrise Group

### November

Cathy M. 1 year  
Eddie A. 1 year  
Edward Z. 1 year  
Gary G. 14 years  
Robin C. 3 years  
Stephen P. 39 years

### December

Dan B. 36 years  
Jim K. 2 years  
John Q. 41 years  
Joop V. 28 years  
Rich R. 28 years  
Susie T. 20 years

## Women in the Solution

### October

Nicole 1 year  
Sandy Z. 25 years

### November

Patti 13 years  
Susan 16 years

### December

Dawn K. 9 years  
Sam S. 13 years  
Sue W. 4 years

**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.