



# SARA-MANA INTERGROUP NEWSLETTER

March 2018

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aasrq.org

## We're Back in Business!

Better late than never. It took a few months, but we're ready to kick off 2018 with the March edition of the **Sara-Mana Intergroup Newsletter**. Please bear with us as we get everything in its proper place over the next few months. A number of longtime contributors are featured in this issue, and the newsletter owes its gratitude to Edgar C, Nancy B and the ol' Alkie of "Dear Alkie" fame for their support. Thanks also to all of the groups that have passed along anniversaries and to Misoon W. and Ross J. for writing our featured articles.

It's your intergroup and your newsletter, so please pass along updates and announcements to share. Holding an event? Starting a meeting? Changing a format? Need some help? Pass along details and we can help you let the world - or at least members of AA in Sarasota and Manatee counties - know. And keep sending in those anniversaries. If your group hasn't done so in the past, maybe you can consider it? Drop us a line at

newsletter@AAsrq.org.

-- Editor

## Came to Believe

-- Misoon W.

I came through the doors Alcoholics Anonymous with an attitude of intolerance and belligerent denial. I was agnostic. I knew that God was for weak and pathetic people who didn't know any better; they made him up so they would feel complete.

I was gripped with anger, fear and remorse. In the meetings, I was hostile and told everyone to "back off!" I could not and would not ask for help. The people in AA expressed concern that I may not stay sober. They might have been right. I did not want to stay sober, and I did not want to drink. I was at the "jumping off place." I wanted to check out. I'm not quite sure how exactly, but I managed to be in those AA meetings every day. After the meetings, I would walk back to my small apartment that had no furniture except for an old mattress. I would sit on the floor all alone. Uncontrollable tears would stream down my cheeks, and my heart would ache for hours. I was convinced I was doomed.

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## You Take the Wheel

-- Ross J.

The title of a popular country song by Carrie Underwood is "Jesus Take the Wheel." This is a spiritual song about a woman who is losing control of her vehicle and suddenly cries out to her higher power, "Jesus Take The Wheel!" The message is that when disaster is about to strike and there is nothing on this earth that can save you, let go and let God.

Many of us come to AA without a deep religious background. In fact, many of us are so beat up by the time that we enter the rooms that we are convinced that there is no God or, if there is, that He has forsaken us. We desperately grab for the promise of sobriety, choose a sponsor and then embark on a shaky path towards a sober lifestyle.

As we begin to work the steps, we start with admitting what a disaster we had made of our lives in step one. By the time that we find our way into the rooms, this is often self-evident.

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## Came to Believe

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I desperately and secretly begged a God I did not understand to not allow me to wake up the next morning and face another day of misery. I knew I did not have a chance at this thing called sobriety.

It was just like any other night in my small apartment. I came home from the meeting as usual. My mind was racing, and I could not fall asleep. Once again I was begging for the end. My watery eyes caught a glimpse of the Big Book, opened to page 63. I started reading the Third Step Prayer. At first, it gave me nausea. An attitude of intolerance came over me. But I read it again and again, not knowing why. The part about taking away my difficulties surrounded my crying and aching heart. Soon, tears of relief replaced the tears of paralyzing fear. At that moment, somehow, I knew I was going to be okay. That was the beginning of my inadequate concept of God.

Soon after that, I wrote my personal inventory and met with my sponsor to do Step Five. She led me through the rest of the 12 Steps. By taking these certain steps with my sponsor, I began a new way of life. I consider that being reborn.

I will never forget that night. I did not know this then, but the God of my understanding was so loving that he visited me, a weak and pathetic one who didn't know any better, on that fearful night in my small lonely apartment.

Good  
Orderly  
Direction

## 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. A family member has blown a minor issue out of all proportion and has permanently ended our relationship. I am hurt, angry and confused. How do I avoid getting a resentment?**

**A.** Trying to avoid GETTING resentments is a little like trying to avoid going to the bathroom – unnatural, unhealthy and doomed to fail. It's KEEPING a resentment that's poison for an alcoholic. Realize the offender may have some real emotional problems. Standard advice is to forgive for your own sake – often easier said than done. Personally, I have found getting over the anger allows resentment to have an escape route. Some problems don't have solutions, so accept that possibility. "Let go and let God" is more than an A.A. saying – it's good advice.

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**Q. I've reached middle age and am really enjoying my sobriety and freedom from destructive behavior. But it's the "happy" part of "happy, joyous and free" that seems to have lost its zest. I don't seem to feel the thrill from things, places and activities I had when I was younger. Any advice?**

**A.** Congratulations – you are growing up. As emotionally healthy people mature they realize that true happiness come from helping others, not from selfish personal satisfaction. A luxury car is just a car, and trying for a lower golf handicap just gives you heartburn and robs you of the fun and companionship of the game. In the full Serenity Prayer, we ask to be "reasonably happy in this life" – a realistic goal.

## *From My Journal*

by Nancy B.



My daily reprieve means that no matter how painful or difficult things appear today, I can draw upon the power of the AA program to stay liberated from my cunning, powerful and baffling disease of alcoholism **and** the self-centered, negative way of thinking that went along with it. When I stay in the day with my thoughts and actions I have peace. When I don't, I have anxiety and/or the blues.

My daily reading in the **Daily Reflections** and the writing I do after reading are my main meditation and they bring me solidly into a peaceful and grateful state every morning. This has become my favorite time of the day. As I go through my day there are countless triggers that threaten to get me into old habits of self-centeredness, self-righteousness, controlling or fearful thoughts and behavior. The list could go on and on.

I am not comfortable in my own skin when these old habits crop up but AA has taught me that this discomfort does not have to be my normal anymore. I can choose to use the discomfort as a signal that my alcoholic thinking is repossessing my mind and turn it over to my higher power. I do this many, many times a day and I always return to peace.

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**Q. OK, I've written my 4th step inventory and since it's the 5th month, my sponsor wants to have the 5th step "talk." Do I have to?**

**A.** Only if you want to stay sober and find the truth about yourself. The truth will set you free but the messenger (sponsor) might annoy you. Have courage.

SAVE THE DATE!

SATURDAY,  
AUGUST 25

“CARRY THE MESSAGE”  
10:00AM-2:00PM

MORE WILL BE  
REVEALED

WILLING TO VOLUNTEER?  
CONTACT MICK

paisley06@gmail.com

## Back of the Book Preventing a Retreat

--Edgar C.

Bill Wilson often said that the testimonial stories in the back of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonamous*, might prove to be more valuable in achieving sobriety than the main text of that book.

The same might be said of Wilson's supplemental writing such as *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. On page 73 of his study of Step Seven, Wilson wrote:

“...we reluctantly come to grips with those serious character flaws that made problem drinkers of us in the first place, flaws which must be dealt with to prevent a retreat into alcoholism once again.”

## You Take the Wheel

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Then comes a tiny taste of religion when we came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity in step two. Surely there is someone or something more powerful than I, so we gingerly make our way through step two. After these baby steps we are asked to take the giant leap to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understand him.

Hold it, now! I've been in the driver's seat for decades and, just like that, I'm supposed to turn over my will and my life? To whom? To God? Who is God? What qualifies him or her to take over and run my life? That's my job! I've done this all my life and look where I am now!

At the point that I contemplated step three, I was at the bottom of the barrel, looking up at the tiny little opening at the top and trying to figure out how I was going to climb out of this thing and get my life back. Step three is where we take a giant leap of faith. This is where we admit that we had not been doing such a great job of running our lives, after all. We entertain the possibility that there is something or someone out there that can do a better job of running our lives than we had. All we had to do was let go. Is that all? Just let go? Almost, but not quite. We also had to let God.

That was a bridge too far for me, at first. It took some work on the part of my sponsor and some quiet contemplation for me. What did it for me was to acknowledge the miracle of my recovery.

I was a daily drinker who was sick and tired of being sick and tired, but I poured that poison down my throat every day.

Day after day I lost the fight to remain sober, and there seemed to be no help for me. But now I was sober, and that was a miracle. When I was beat down until I just felt as if I could not go on I was given my life back.

I finally let go and let God, and life got good. God did for me what I could not do for myself. That does not mean that I have no responsibility for my daily existence. I still have to meet my business and societal obligations. I still have to do the work, every day, that helps to keep me sober. What this means is that I am no longer in the driver's seat. God is my co-pilot.

I carry out my daily existence with the knowledge that God is here with me and helping me every day and in every way. When I turned my will and my life over to God, I was then free from fear and despair. The proof of God's existence is all around me in the miracle that is this world and in the miracle that is my own sober existence. When I try to take my will back, things get a little more difficult, and then I have to recognize where I am going wrong and turn my will back over, once again.

Every day I have the choice, and I choose to turn my will and my life over to God. Every day I am rewarded by my continued sobriety. It works if you work it. Step three did not come naturally or easily to me but it was worth the time and effort it took for me to complete this step. Life is good again, with God's help!

### MARCH AA MILESTONES

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|------|--|
| 1881 | Dr. Bob's wife, Anne, was born.          |
| 1891 | Louis W. was born.                       |
| 1941 | 2nd printing of Big Book made available. |
| 1947 | 1st AA group in London, England formed.  |
| 1951 | Dr. Silkworth passed away.               |
| 1966 | Ebby T. passed away.                     |

# ANNIVERSARIES

Groups: Please email birthdays to newsletter@AAsrq.org and put **ANNIVERSARIES** in the subject line. Cutoff for the newsletter is the last day of the month. Anniversaries will appear the month after they occur (ie., March anniversaries will appear in April).

<u>Happy Cookie Hour</u>		<u>Sunrise Group</u>	
<b>February</b>		<b>January</b>	
Bart	6	Anne G.	17
Karen B.	10	Bobby W.	2
Jerry D.	10	Cindy C.	21
Scotty T.	7	Denise W.	33
Shaun S.	29	Liz A.	16
		Mike L.	9
<b>Primary Porpoise</b>		Paul L.	6
<b>January</b>		<b>February</b>	
Gordon G.	11	Jamie K.	6
Pam C.	25	John F.	15
Jane R.	32	Bernard G.	3
<b>February</b>		Carol D.	22
John G.	21	Tina R.	4
Judy J.	36		
<b>Saturday Night</b>		<b>WITS</b>	
<b>Speakers Group</b>		<b>January</b>	
<b>January</b>		Dawn K.	7
Randy M.	1	Audrey	7
Maryanne K.	5	Sam S.	11
Misoon W.	23	Anne C.	13
<b>February</b>		Val F.	1
Rick C.	1	<b>February</b>	
		Helen	10
		Judy	30

You Probably Haven't Heard, but . . .

## Central Office Needs Your Support!

District 4's Central Officer serving Sarasota and Manatee Counties is trying to raise \$30K by April 16, 2018 to meet the goal for the **Annual Fund Drive**.

### So, What Does Central Office Do for Us?

- Answers questions about AA.
- Provides and maintains 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.
- Produces 15% of the world's Arabica coffee. (No, wait, that's *Central America*.)
- Provides the services necessary for us to accomplish 12th step work.

Individual contributions are greatly appreciated.

**Envelopes are at your meeting through your GSR and Intergroup Reps.**



### Sarasota Volunteer Needed Service Work 1x Per Month

Pick up Sara-Mana Intergroup Newsletter from our fantastic printers at

Creative Technology, 5959 Palmer Blvd., Sarasota  
And drop them off at Central Office. **Easy as that!**

If you can help, email us: newsletter@AAsrq.org  
Thanks! -- Editor

### NEW MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

### Meat & Potatoes Step & Tradition Meeting

**Where:** St. Frances X Cabrini Church  
In the Cabrini Center

12001 69th Street East, Parrish, FL

**When:** Thursdays @ 7:30 pm

**Details:** Closed Meeting

Please bring your 12 & 12