



On the web at aasrq.org

Sara-Mana Intergroup

P.O. Box 3075 1748 Independence Blvd., #B2, Sarasota, FL

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.

NOVEMBER 2015

Central Office (941) 351-4818

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

A.A. Singleness of Purpose: Alcoholics Only, Bill W. Wrote

The following text is from the A.A. pamphlet, Problems Other Than Alcohol, which is made up of excerpts from a Grapevine article written by Founder Bill Wilson.

"The problem of drug addiction in its several forms lies close to us all. It stirs our deepest interest and sympathy. Many A.A.'s, especially those who have suffered these particular addictions, are now asking, 'What can we do about drugs-within our Fellowship, and without?'"

"Specifically, here is a list of questions we are often asked, and the simple answers:

"Can a nonalcoholic pill or drug addict become an A.A. member? No.

"Can such a person be brought, as a visitor, to an open A.A. meeting for help and inspiration? Yes.

"If so, should these nonalcoholic pill or drug users be led to believe that they have become A.A. members? No.

"Can a pill or drug taker, who also has a genuine alcoholic history, become a member of A.A.? Yes,

"Now there are certain things that A.A. cannot do for anybody, regardless of what our desires or sympathies may be. Our first duty, as a fellowship, is to insure our own survival. Therefore, we have to avoid distractions and multipurpose activity.

"Sobriety - freedom from alcohol - through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps, is the sole purpose of an A.A. group. Groups have repeatedly tried other activities, and they have always failed. It has also been learned that there is no possible way to make nonalcoholics into A.A.

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How They Found A.A.



The above chart shows how A.A. members were first introduced to the program. It is based on a 2014 survey of 6,000 A.A. members conducted by the national office.

A Note to Our Visitors

Welcome Back, Snowbirds!

It's the time of year when the snow flies in much of the country and that means many seasonal visitors flee to this part of Florida. Sara-Mana District 4 of A.A. extends a warm welcome to all visiting A.A.'s with the hope that you join us in our activities.

You'll find that there is a vibrant A.A. community in west central Florida with hundreds of meetings of every kind, each week. Occasionally, we have special events like New Year's Eve Dance, and South Florida Area 15 Assembly (Jan. 8-10, Sarasota Hyatt). To learn about 'what's happening' or find a meeting, go to our web site www.aasrq.org.

When you visit one of our meetings, pick up a copy of "Where & When" which lists all our meeting

Remember Your Last Drunk—Always

By Anonymous

That's not a typographical error. The word is "drunk," not "drink," as you'll see.

"A drink" is a term which has awakened pleasurable echoes and anticipations in millions of people for centuries.

Depending on our age, and on the circumstances which surrounded our first experiences with alcohol, we all have various memories and hopes (sometimes, anxieties) aroused by the thought of a cool beer, a bullshot, a gin and tonic, a boilermaker, a sip of wine, or whatever.

A searching, fearless look at our complete drinking record, however, shows that in the last years and months our drinking never created those perfect, magic moments again, no matter how often we tried for

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details. Feel free to ask us 'locals' anything you wish about sobriety support.

. When you're on vacation, it's easy to be lulled into a sense of complacency and "the rules don't apply" attitude. But all A.A.s know that alcohol is "cunning, baffling and powerful" — patient also. We're here to support your commitment to a happy, joyous and free life – so join us when you need, help us when you can.

We're truly happy to welcome you even though you may hear some grumbling about snowbirds causing traffic congestion or crowded restaurants. After all, we natives do seriously appreciate your help in "keeping Florida green" by spending your vacation money with us.—Jim L.



"This is the life! Soft music, dim lights, a beautiful maiden, drink in hand, romance in the air . . ."

Halloween Miracle: Lost Boy Found

By Doug R.

While actively drinking, I frequently isolated and avoided others with determination and sincere dedication. Halloween was particularly difficult, as while I enjoy holidays, I frankly just wanted to be left alone and on Halloween people invite themselves to our houses with glee! I would sit, drinking in the dark, both of the night and of my spirit, hoping that few chose to knock at my darkened door and feeling guilty for being such a lousy neighbor.

What a surprise then it was for me to be out in my neighborhood on my second Halloween in A.A. and experiencing a great opportunity to give back.

The mother of a special needs child rode her bike up the driveway in a panic and announced, "I can't find him, I don't know where he is!" I hopped in the car with a friend and drove the streets until fortunately we came across him; dressed as his favorite wizard and far away from his home, in fact several blocks outside of the neighborhood.

He gladly jumped in the car and immediately started offering a tearful plea, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I got lost and didn't know what to do."

We returned him to his overwhelmed and grateful mother who with a hug and a few encouraging words calmed his fear.

What a difference in just a couple of years; from hiding in the dark, avoiding others, dying a slow and miserable death to being amongst others, being useful and striving to follow the steps of a sober and grateful life. I am very grateful for the gifts offered through A.A.

Upcoming Events

- *Central Office Open House Dec. 5*
 - *New Year's Eve Dance Dec. 31*
- Location to be Announced*

Back of the Book

Building a New Life

The stories in the back of the Big Book were believed by Bill Wilson to be the most important part of the tome, yet they are often overlooked. Readers are invited to supply a favorite passage, thought, or theme from a story.

Two vital simplifications are contained in just the few words below, taken from page 486, the story "Building a New Life."

"... it doesn't matter what hardships and losses I've endured in sobriety. I have not had to go back to drinking. As long as I work the program, keep being of service, go to meetings, and keep my spiritual life together, I can live a decent life."

The first line reminds us that "hardships and losses" may come along in sobriety, and the last phrase promises a "decent life," something none of us enjoyed while drinking. In between are the four vital actions an A.A. must take.

In just these few words, the writer has simplified the program and described the results.—*Edgar C.*

Your Last Drunk

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them.

Therefore, when the suggestion of "a drink" comes to us, we now try to remember the whole train of consequences of starting with just "a drink." We think the drink all the way through, down to our last miserable drunk and hangover. Drinking for us no longer means music and gay laughter and flirtations. It means sickness and sorrow.

One A.A. member puts it this way: "I know now that stopping in for a drink will never again be me simply killing a few minutes and leaving a buck on the bar. In exchange for that drink, what I would plunk down now is my bank account, my family, our home, our car, my job, my sanity, and probably my life. It's too big a price, too big a risk."

He remembers his last drunk, not his first drink.

A.A. is for Alcoholics, Only

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members. We have to confine our membership to alcoholics, and we have to confine our A.A. groups to a single purpose. If we don't stick to these principles, we shall almost surely collapse. And if we collapse, we cannot help anyone.

"I see no way of making nonalcoholic addicts into A.A. members. Experience says loudly that we can admit no exceptions, even though drug users and alcoholics happen to be first cousins of a sort. If we persist in trying this, I'm afraid it will be hard on the drug user himself, as well as on A.A. We must accept the fact that no nonalcoholic, whatever his affliction, can be converted into an alcoholic _ . . . and an A.A. member.

"We cannot give A.A. membership to nonalcoholic addicts. But, like anyone else, they should be able to attend open A.A. meetings, provided, of course, that the groups themselves are willing."

Reprints of complete article available at 15¢ each from: P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

2016 Budget District 4 General Service

Income		\$32,270.00
Group & Individual Contributions	\$22,240.00	
Quarterly Hosting	\$750.00	
District Meeting Basket & Donuts	\$1,100.00	
Delegates Report	\$80.00	
Founder's Day Dinner	\$6,000.00	
New Years Eve Event	\$1,700.00	
Intergroup Contribution	\$400.00	
Expenses		\$32,270.00
Quarterly Expenses	\$7,500.00	
Quarterly Host Expense	\$1,000.00	
Central Office (rent/supplies)	\$8,200.00	
Archives Committee	\$800.00	
Current Practices Committee	\$-	
Events Committee - Founders Day Dinner	\$5,500.00	
Events Committee - New Years Eve Event	\$900.00	
Finance Committee	\$-	
Grapevine Committee	\$30.00	
H & I Committee	\$3,300.00	
Literature Committee	\$30.00	
PI/CPC Committee	\$2,400.00	
Special Needs Committee	\$-	
Translation Equipment	\$50.00	
Delegates Report	\$450.00	
Regional Forum	\$450.00	
Officers Expenses	\$60.00	
Area 15 Contributions	\$1,600.00	

Dear Alkie

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

Q. While I love most things about A.A., I struggle with the idea "we will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it." I have plenty of regrets – so how do I reconcile my feelings with A.A.'s teachings?

A. I feel sad about old behavior and opportunities lost also. This is about acceptance, forgiveness and remembrance. Accepting your past mistakes as old business you can't change – so don't let your regrets be an excuse for future mistakes. Forgiving yourself – stop beating yourself up when there maybe others willing to do the job for you. Remember the feelings that brought you to AA – aka 'keeping it green'. Life is not a dress rehearsal – 30,000 sunrises (more or less) is all we get – and the majority of those are likely in our past.

Q. My cravings for drink are gone but memories of good times while drinking still haunt me. Will I relapse?

A. Depends on the quality of your program. Personally, my disease is wrapped up in a body that can't take it and a mind that won't leave it alone. Listening to a wise sponsor and following the steps should get you through. The chant at the end of each meeting says it all – "it works IF you work it."

Q. I've been working hard to make the 12 steps my code for living, but the 11th step has me stumped – how do you know what is "(God's) will for us"?

A. You are not alone. Most of us spend our lives telling God what we want rather than asking Him what He wants us to do. Meditation for me means a quiet, solitary time to reflect on the purpose of my life. Almost all of us have a basic sense of morality – when I put my own wishes aside, I'll know to do "the next right thing" even if it requires self-sacrifice.

Al-Anon "Miracles" Listed

I don't believe in Miracles....BUT since I came to Al-Anon; my attitude toward people, toward myself and thus toward my entire life has changed.

I no longer feel responsible for what others do or don't do.

I no longer try to "fix" the lives of others.

My way is no longer the only way.

I am no longer constantly involved in arguments with others.

I am aware of my own shortcomings & they no longer frighten me.

I am no longer indifferent to the people closest to me.

I have more spirituality.

My life is filled with love.

Are these Miracles?

I admit I am powerless over many things.

I am consciously aware of the program and its applications.

I am WILLING to work my program daily.

I strive to become "entirely ready" one shortcoming at a time.

I struggle through shyness and reticence to carry the message.

I use the strengths that I have inventoried.

I use the wisdom and experience I hear at meetings.

I am open and welcome change even when it comes with pain.

The Traditions are reflected in my relationships.

Are these changes in me Miraculous? Call them what you will, my life is now, beyond my wildest dreams.

(Supplied by A.A. Liaison Connie G. Published with permission. Taken from the Simply Put Newsletter. Al-Anon / Alateen Family Groups. Hope and help for families and friends of alcoholics. www.al-anon12.org)