



On the web at aasrq.org

Sara-Mana Intergroup

POBox 3075 1748 Independence Blvd. #B2 Sarasota, FL 34234

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.

APRIL 2016

Central Office (941) 351-4818

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

Day Count Has Great Benefits for Everyone

By William G.

“God manifests through other people” and “Don’t leave till the miracle happens” are two of my favorite A.A. truisms that recently became connected for me.

You see, our group has of late experienced a bounty of newcomers. Our tradition is having said newcomers announce their day counts out loud for each of their first 90 days.

This has two wonderful effects. For the newcomer, it is strange and wonderful to announce to a group of strangers your deep, dark and shameful secret and then to be, wonder of wonders, applauded for it!

For us with more time, we get to see, as plain as the noses on their faces, authentic, inarguable, visible miracles.

In the short span of a mere 90 days (a lifetime if you’re new) we get to watch a Higher Power manifest in the newcomer.

How He Handles Life on Life’s Terms

By Anonymous

Handling life on life’s terms is the central theme around which the Promises turn. Getting and maintaining our freedoms — from fears, from insecurities, from the blistering agony of walking around judging everything, such bondage! — was for me a gift I never even contemplated when I first stumbled in wanting to know how just not drink for a day or two. Navigating with ease now, the game really is to see myself when I’m handling life and to



“Next time, be more careful where you point that thing.”

New Summer Hours for Central Office

From June 1 to Oct. 1, Central Office will be open 3 days a week from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Hours for meetings of committees, General Service, and Intergroup remain unchanged.

see myself when I’m not handling it; more and more, I can not only SEE myself doing something that just ain’t handlin’ it, but can actually be amused (that is, forgiving and light-hearted about the forgiving !). I cut myself some slack? Wow. And then I get better and better at cutting other people slack? Wow squared. Now cutting people slack doesn’t mean I don’t care about their shortcomings and successes.

Rocketing into the Fourth Dimension here takes some cojones, and I’m committed that everybody who stops drinking and using actually get the roadmap. I developed the balls and the heart the step in to the ring, to actually

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Central Office 2016 Fund Drive at an ALL-TIME LOW

With just over two weeks to go, the 2016 Central Office Fund Drive stands at \$18,000 We are \$12,000 short of our goal.

It is your individual contributions that keep the doors of the Central Office open to serve our groups, members, committees and individuals walking in off the street wanting information about A.A.

We thank those of you who have already contributed so generously this year and ask those who have not to please do so. —Tony F. Central Office

Bill W. Tells How He Gained from Pain

“Though I still find it difficult to accept today’s pain and anxiety with any great degree of serenity — as those more advanced in the spiritual life seem able to do — I can give thanks for present pain nevertheless. I find the willingness to do this by contemplating the lessons learned from past suffering — lessons which have led to the blessings I now enjoy. I can remember how the agonies of alcoholism, the pain of rebellion and thwarted pride, have often led me to God’s grace, and so to a new freedom.” Bill W., *Grapevine*, March 1962 c. 1967 AAWS, *As Bill Sees It*, p. 266

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You’re responsible for the effort, not the outcome.
—Joan H.

Yesterday's Denial Is Today's Acceptance

By Deb S.

My drinking started at 13 years of age. I loved the taste of beer and what it did for me. It helped me to forget who I was because I had a lot of shame and guilt. I grew up in the '60s and I always felt different even before I picked up that 1st drink. I came from an abusive alcoholic family with lots of secrets. I was a juvenile delinquent when I was younger. I liked to run away from home for days and skip school any chance I had.

At the age of 16 the court system caught up with me and sent me to a women's prison for 10 day observation and 1 year of probation. They called me a stubborn child back then. My shame, guilt, resentment against my mother for pressing the charges in court took over me.

I was also dealing with a big secret for many years until I came out of the closet as a lesbian in my late 20's. This of course compounded the shame and guilt. I never learned about acceptance - didn't know what it was. I had so much fear of everything, even of myself. My sexuality had me drinking to numb myself, I just couldn't accept myself. The only way to deal with my situations was to numb myself with anything I could get my hands on. My life was unmanageable for many years and I never saw it.

I was no stranger to A.A. My Mom brought me to Alon meetings at an early age. Dad was in and out of rehabs and detoxes. Than I became my father - an alcoholic. In 2 rehabs. The most time I could put together was 7 years and the first 5 years were the best time of my life. Going to meetings, hanging out with good, sober people. After 5 years I stopped my meetings because I thought I was no longer an alcoholic. I picked up pot smoking and did that for many years without a drink. I thought smoking pot was OK because it wasn't addictive.

I eventually picked up that first beer and I still thought I could control my drinking, I was off and running for the next 10 years. The beer and pot finally caught up with me. My brain wasn't functioning well. I felt I was losing my mind. I felt my brain became so numb because of the progression of this disease. At 60 years old I had a quadruple bypass - scared me to death. But it didn't stop me from drinking. I healed from my surgery and kept drinking.

At the young age of 62, I had enough; I was so sick and tired of being sick.

Today I have almost nine months of sobriety and I feel great. I have a sponsor. I work the steps of A.A. I do service work and I go to meetings on a regular basis. The biggest part of my recovery today is my spirituality. I can honestly say today I am a grateful recovering alcoholic.

Delegate's Report May 14 in Seminole

The delegate's report on the general conference proceedings this year be a potluck lunch for Districts 1, 4 (us), and 15 followed by the delegates report. The lunch will be at Noon in the Church of the Good Shepherd, 10891 102nd Avenue North, Seminole, FL 33778.

Central Office will coordinate carpooling for those interested.

Nancy's Notes

“I Look for My Part In It . . .”

Nancy B. keeps a daily journal, and enters thoughts about the A.A. program triggered by her morning readings.

The spiritual axiom of Step 10 was the first and most dramatic A.A. teaching in my early sobriety. The truth and practicality of it showed me a part of A.A. I didn't yet understand. Before coming into A.A., I didn't even know about *emotional sobriety*. For quick access I've changed the language for myself to get right to the point for action—I think of it as “*if I am disturbed, I look for my part in it.*”

Practicing this principle has improved my life immeasurably. Making the search for my part in a disturbance reveals patterns I can work on to change to clear up the disturbance and avoid future similar situations. I let go of expectations and trying to change other people. Life is simpler and more satisfying.

Handling Life on Life Terms

(Continued from Page 1)

taste life, the ride the roller-coaster. So many of my writings are about just this — eyes open recognizing opportunity. And parts of me — the addict me — wants to run from it and hide, and distract myself with something else, assuming the “challenge” will just disappear.

I actually saw myself do it and go through the thinking JUST NOW (!) after that last paragraph just kind of ended and my inclination was to pull my hands away from the keyboard and walk away.

The thought of popping some popcorn crossed my mind and the addict brain who is so good at diversion and escape ALLLLLLLMOST stood up and walked across the kitchen. But I stayed here. And I kept breathing, and I watched myself be OK in the discomfort of mediocrity. I haven't re-read the sentences above, and I probably won't, and realistically I'm not a good judge of whether it's good or not. I bet the words are kind of middling, but what is NOT middling — what is EXTRAORDINARY, and what is EMPOWERING — is that I feel calm and centered and validated, and I FEEL like I'm offering myself, open-heartedly, honestly, and SOBER-ly. Me, pure, me, in the game, me, figuring it out, me sharing with you so you can give me permission to do it again... and the bonus opportunity — you might even give your *self* permission to do it.

JUST a word or two can buy an extra second in the day, and can shift a HABIT on a dime. And now that I've shifted it once (and now that I have that little dopamine surge from feeling good that I did it once), I'm way more likely to do it again. Habit begets habit, and we do more of what we do. Is what you're doing today working for you? No need to change the world (couldn't anyway), but if you are aware enough to identify something that isn't working, shift it by just enough, just a smidgen, and honor yourself for making the change.

More of that change stuff is on the way. Kudos

What Butterflies Do

Lucia T. passed away on March 6 after almost 60 years in the program. In an email note to a friend just leaving a hospital, Lucia wrote:

“I had a butterfly adventure last week in a wilderness area — I saw a butterfly emerge from her chrysalis. She just stood on a twig — and I assumed that she did not know yet that she was a butterfly, or what butterflies do if she was one. Then the wind blew on her and she climbed up the twig and tried to get back in the chrysalis. Well, of course that didn’t work. So she stood there again, but not for long. Abruptly she spread her wings and flew. That’s what butterflies do.”

Letters to the Editor

Just Observe

I enjoyed the article “4 Qualities to Look for in Choosing a Sponsor” in the February newsletter.

In #3 “Their Words Match Their Actions,” the writer speaks about looking for a sponsor who walks the walk.

I have had the following quotation by the anthropologist Ashley Montagu on my bulletin board for years:

“The only measure of what you believe is what you do. If you want to know what people believe, don’t read what they write, don’t ask them what they believe, just observe what they do.”
—Carol K.

Responsibility Means Living Your Truth

By Robbie K.

In A.A., we must learn to stop expecting others to do as we think they should. We are responsible only for our own conduct: If we take care of our own affairs well, we have enough to do.

We can give the best example to another by living so that he will seek to emulate our life. This silent method of helping him is infinitely more forceful than that of pointing to our own virtues and hoping to have him imitate them.

A great reform would take place in the world if we should try to live truth instead of trying to preach it. After all, our friends are interested in seeing that



“All I need now is a resentment and I can start my own meeting.”

Prayer for 4th Step

Various web sites offer a prayer to accompany the working of each step in our program. These are not part of the official canon of A.A. but are grounded in Big Book comments and are well-regarded by many long-time A.A. members. We print one prayer each month through the end of the year.

4th Step: Pre-Inventory prayer:
“God, please help me to honestly take stock. Help me to search out the flaws in my make-up which caused my failure. Help me to see where resentment has plagued me and resulted in spiritual malady, but more importantly help me to understand my part in these resentments. Help me to resolutely look for my own mistakes and to understand where I had been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened. Please help me to be searching and fearless in my endeavor to write my inventory.” (P. 64:2, 64:3, 67:2)

truth work: they care.

How often we feel that we must regulate the life of another person. The person may know more about life than we do, but still we subject him to criticism because he does not conform to our code or theory of conduct.

**S-Stop
O-Observe
B-Breathe
E-Evaluate
R-Respond, do not React
—Chris C.**

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. I started going to A.A. meetings and find most people to be nice. But I occasionally ‘go out’ with no big consequences. I really wonder if I’m an alcoholic. How do I know?

A. There is truth in the saying “If you think you might have a problem with booze, then you probably do have a problem with booze.” My personal test is ‘if you struggle to stop during an episode of drinking, then you can never again safely start drinking’. Remember, the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking — but only you can decide if you have the desire. We’ll be waiting for you when you make up your mind.

Q. I can’t imagine giving up drink forever but my doctor says I must. I need encouragement.

A. Enjoy staying in the moment; yesterday’s history & tomorrow’s a mystery & today’s a gift — that why it’s call the present. You’re just not drinking today — one day at a time. An old A.A. friend has timeless advice: “you can give up one thing for everything, OR you can give up everything for one thing”. You choose!

Q. I just can’t seem to get started on step 4. Words of inspiration, please!

A. To quote the old Nike ad, “Just do it.” It might help to start a 4th step session with the Fourth Step Prayer over there in column 2.

No one but you and your sponsor (or other confessor) should see it — it’s not a work of art — there is no original sin — you probably will revise it. You can decide to keep or destroy it after your 5th step. But, be careful to keep it confidential to avoid unintended consequences. If you’re still can’t get started, go back to the 3rd step.

I’ve given up all hope of improving my past.

—Lisa M.

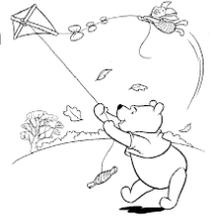
ANNIVERSARIES

Groups: email birthdays to newsletter@AAsrq.org and put ANNIVERSARIES in the subject line. Cutoff for the newsletter is the last day of the month. February anniversaries appear in March.

Bay Group	February	Sunrise
March	Jerry D. 8	March
Bill W. 42	Scotty T. 5	Lou C. 23
Jean W. 35	Bart M. 4	Tim L. 23
Paul N. 9	Kathi Mc 1	Mandy S. 15
Wes E. 3	Robert S. 1	Fred H. 6
		Bill S. 3
Bee Ridge East	Lakewood Ranch	Joy 2
March	12&12	Max R. 2
Jeannette K. 30	March	
Mark H. 18	Marty K. 16	Third Legacy
	Ashley P. 1	Men's
Early Big Book	Bill M. 1	March
March		Steve R. 5
Jack Q. 34	Oasis	Alan K. 1
	Mike M. 49	
Friends of the	Serenity Room	Women's Wed
Pelican	March	Morning - Holmes
March	Bill D. 41	Beach
Bob C. 36	Cathy E. 40	February
Norris E. 27	Don S. 38	Cathy L. 27
Terry H. 19	Diane D. 14	Tracy A. 19
Viola W. 11	Diana S. 2	Merry M. 4
Christopher C. 3		March
Christine R. 1	St. Armand	Rosalyn M. 24
	February	Sheila W. 13
Gulf Gate Noon	John P. 29	Viola W. 10
February	Janet W. 28	Barbara Ann S. 9
Bob K. 40	Cyd P. 13	Pam B. 1
Ross B. 36	March	
Betsy W. 27	Bert C. 49	
Linda S. 1	B.J. 27	
March	Janet B. 17	
Leslie H. 29	David D. 14	
Susan S. 28	Salena W. 9	
Yvonne 1	Theresa C. 8	
	Jeff S. 7	
Happy Cookie		
Hour		

"We don't need to shift our responsibilities onto the shoulders of some deified Spiritual Superman, or sit around and wait for Fate to come knocking at the door. We simply need to believe in the power that's within us, and use it. When we do that, and stop imitating others and competing against them, things begin to work for us."

—Benjamin Hoff, *The Tao of Pooh*



WORD FIND

L V N N U T Q H H H E O I F W
 O A K O E J T A J R D P A E B
 W G U M S G T R U A U E C V I
 Q I F T N L E S L N T N C H S
 D S L E I C I C T U I N E T K
 D I R L O R O W K G T E P I P
 H T L V I H I L L T A S T M K
 S O E E O N C P D R R S A S A
 H R P L A W G C S I G H N B Y
 Y O I S E R E N I T Y T C F V
 H S D B E Y T S E N O H E U C
 M U E G G Y E F Y S M A N X F
 S N O I T I D A R T S D I Y V
 K V V D W G H X I X P L P U C
 T L F D W N V E N Q R F T H X

ACCEPTANCE

ALCOHOLISM

GRATITUDE

HONESTY

HOPE

OPENNESS

RECOVERY

SERENITY

SMITH

SPIRITUAL

STRENGTH

TRADITIONS

WILLINGNESS

WILSON

An Opportunity for GREAT Service Work!

The Sara-Mana Helpline needs YOU, for a few short hours a week to answer the hotline!

Available shifts include:

Sunday: 9am-12pm, 6-9pm

Monday: 6pm-9pm

Tuesday: 9am-12pm (@ Central Office)

Friday: 9pm – midnight, 12pm – 3pm

Please contact the Central Office:

(941) 351-4818, for more information.



The purpose of this newsletter is to inform, connect and entertain. TO SUBMIT ITEMS TO THE NEWSLETTER: Anniversaries, articles and meeting notices should be sent to newsletter@AAsrq.org. Submit material as attachments or directly in an email. Include your first name, group and type of item being sent. Deadline is the last day of the month. Submissions may be edited for length or content. Opinions expressed herein are those of the writers and not necessarily those of A.A., Sara-Mana Intergroup, or the Central Office, located at #B-2, 1748 Independence Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34234. Phone 941- 351-4818.