



# Sara-Mana Intergroup

P.O. Box 3075 1748 Independence Blvd., #B2, Sarasota, FL 34234

On the web at [aasrq.org](http://aasrq.org)



January 2013      Central Office (941-351-4818)      Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

## Beginner's Blog

This is the time of year many people make resolutions. They resolve to make certain changes, but to truly make a change, one word comes to mind: commitment. Without it, no lasting change can be made.

In recovery, commitment is essential for progress. Commitment begins with a willingness of mind and heart. This leads to a promise to one's self that has to be followed by action. If coerced, it is not a commitment. It is instead force at work. Many are on the path to recovery due to "a nudge from the judge." Commitment can result from that "push," but must be actively pursued.

A commitment must be fulfilled; not broken. For alcoholics in recovery, each day begins with a commitment to not drink today. Then action, the "doing," follows. For a newcomer, it means meetings, readings, connecting to something greater than oneself, a Higher Power.

For those farther down the recovery road, action may include daily prayers and meditations, speaking with other alcoholics, service work for A.A., sponsorship, Step 12 visits, participating in group business, working with a Sara-Mana committee, and most importantly taking and working on the Steps.

It's a new year, a new slate and chance to truly change things we know need changing. Whether newbies or long timers, we strive for progress and not perfection. For progress, we need a commitment to recovery. Begin with willingness and a promise and continue it through daily actions. Happy New Year and New Commitments to all!

## Support needed for 2013 Central Office fund drive, starting January 1

Gratefully recovering alcoholics throughout Sarasota and Manatee counties will have an opportunity to show their gratitude during the 2013 Central Office fund drive from January 1 to April 16.

The Central Office of Sara-Mana is much more than books. It is in fact the central office of our local A.A. service structure and local face of A.A.

The office was established in 1986 to carry the A.A. message to the suffering alcoholic, to provide information about A.A. to the community, supply A.A.

literature/support to people wanting to be, or already in recovery. It provides an informational web site, a place for Help Line volunteers to answer phones, and space for Intergroup, General Services and their respective committees to meet and conduct business.

The Central Office also communicates and shares general information about Alcoholics Anonymous and the A.A. community with other Intergroup /Central Offices in the South Florida area, as well as throughout the U. S. and Canada.

The Sara-Mana Central Office is highly regarded. Many have said it is the best in the state, and possibly the country.

To provide these services and a host of others, the help of individual A.A. members is needed.

Book sales alone, can only supply some of the funds necessary to keep the doors of the Central Office open. The rest of the funds required come directly from our annual fund drive and your contributions.

As you have in the past, please contribute again this year. All contributions large or small are greatly appreciated.

Fund drive envelopes will be available at your meetings and at the Central Office. You can also mail your contribution to the above address.

## Say FCYPAA three times fast

Recently you may have noticed the announcement portions of our meetings have been taken over by wild-eyed youth saying weird words like "FCYPAA" (sounds like figgy pie) and announcing events involving rock bands and game shows. Allow us to introduce ourselves; we are the Suncoast Bid for the Florida Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (FCYPAA). We define a young person as anyone with room to grow, and FCYPAA is an annual conference where young people come together to share their experience, strength, hope, enthusiasm, love and laughter with one another while carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

We will bid this summer to bring the conference to the Suncoast area in 2014, and we throw monthly events to attract awareness and support to our cause. Any who are interested in being involved are encouraged to participate. Our committee meets every Friday at 8:30 p.m. at Central Office (please use rear entrance). More info at [www.suncoastbid.org](http://www.suncoastbid.org).

## Open house thanks

Thanks to all who made the Dec. 1 Central Office open house a great success. Special thanks to Doug S. for coordinating the festivities and Diane S. for her enthusiasm. We could hardly have had the raffle without her on the microphone. It reminded me of years past when another of our members went around interviewing the day's participants.

This year we saw many of our long time members here and to our pleasant surprise, many attendees who had never been to the office before, and many of them new in sobriety.

There was plenty of fun, food and fellowship for all. Thanks also to those who brought some of the goodies. Once again Susan's meatballs were a hit and the crab & lobster salad was wonderful.

If you happened to miss it, all I can say is the 2013 Open House will be on the first Saturday in December.

Tony

## Grapevine back issues needed!

The Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC) committee needs back issues of *Grapevine* magazine to use in presentations. PI/CPC uses 328 GVs/year on average. Having GVs donated will cut the cost of purchasing back issues.

Because of increased demand, PI/CPC has had to abandon its "Plant a Grapevine" project of leaving copies on tables in waiting rooms in Sarasota and Manatee counties of medical professionals, health departments, hospitals and clinics, the VA, Department of Children and Families, Jewish Family & Children's Services, at jails and others.

If each General Service Rep asks for GVs at meetings, they can bring them to the monthly general service meeting and give them to the committee chair. It's a simple, effective way to get quantities of the GV and keep costs down.

## YOU need to know this

The **EVENTS COMMITTEE SURVEY** regarding **FOUNDERS DAY/ GRATITUDE DINNER** to date indicates a change in venue, such as a Beach Party or Pot Luck Dinner. Please respond through your survey and GSR by January 19th (our next general service meeting). It is important you respond to allow the committee time to plan these events. Tom M., incoming events chair, will be available the weekend of January 11th-13th at the General Assembly at the Hyatt. Tom can also be reached at [events@aaarsq.org](mailto:events@aaarsq.org).

The **NO NONSENSE GROUP** has disbanded.

**Friends of the Pelican** will celebrate its 33<sup>rd</sup> Group Anniversary with a potluck dinner and Bill W., Thursday, Feb. 28, 2013, 6 p.m.

**Looking for a great service opportunity?** Join the PI/CPC Committee and help to carry our message of recovery to our community. The PI/CPC Committee meets the second Wednesday each month from 5:30-6:30 at Central Office. Reach us via email at [picpc@aaarsq.org](mailto:picpc@aaarsq.org).



## New Year's resolutions.....or not

For me, each day is a new beginning, and an opportunity to improve on my actions of yesterday, so I'm not crazy about putting too much weight on New Year's resolutions.

For me, that's a huge plan to turn around so many things of the past overnight and expect to carry it through an entire year. I will diet, exercise, clean out my closets, organize, and improve my finances. What? All at one time?

Maybe tackling everything at once isn't rational or workable, but how about an inventory? The news media does it, many organizations and individuals review the highlights, positive and negative, of the preceding year. Maybe it is a good time—first day, first month, brand new calendar year—to take a closer look at my progress to date.

I have benefitted from every inventory I've done since becoming a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. In *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, Step 10, p. 89, various inventories are described, including "... an-

nual or semiannual housecleanings." And, as my sponsor reminds me—and I remind my sponsees—an inventory that is entirely negative is not realistic. If my review of the past year turns up only wrong-doings and shortcomings, it forecasts a gloomy year ahead. How interesting that my hindsight tends to miss some of the happy miracles that occurred not so long ago.

If my New Year's inventory reveals many areas that need specific improvements, I get together with my sponsor or other trusted confidant and discuss those things which are objectionable. After getting the feedback of another, if I imagine (in my grandiose way) I can achieve overnight all the measures necessary to correct my previous waywardness, I am setting myself up for failure. Call it self-sabotage, but if, with the help of my sponsor, I honestly appraise my self-appraisal, and there is a lot of improvement to do, then the best way to go about that is one day at a time. -Anonymous

## 3 for January

### Step 1

We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.

### Tradition 1

Our common welfare should come first;

personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.

### Concept 1

Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

# The much misunderstood group service number of Alcoholics Anonymous

*Part II on forming A.A. groups*  
Once your group form has been processed, you receive a letter giving you the "group service number." Just what does this number mean? There are those who have communicated with G.S.O. regarding groups that claim to have been "recognized" as an official A.A. group because they received a number. However, your group service number implies no such approval. Nor does it constitute or imply endorsement of any group's approach to or practice of the traditional A.A. program.

According to G.S.O. staff member Rick W., "Being 'registered' at G.S.O. simply means that an A.A. group has requested to have its general service representative (G.S.R.) or mail contact listed in our records for communication purposes. Being on the list at G.S.O. does not in any way make a group an official A.A. group; it simply allows us to be in touch with the group, to share information with them about what is happening in A.A., particularly through the G.S.O. newsletter Box 4-5-9.

"A group does not need to be listed in the records at G.S.O. to be an A.A. group. When a group asks to be listed in our records, the computer system assigns it a unique number, called a group service number. The same is true for any individual or entity, such as an area delegate, a district committee member, the chair of a committee at the area or district level, an intergroup/central office, an international General Service Office, etc. These are all assigned group service numbers. Because the identifier can apply to individuals or A.A. entities besides groups, 'group service number' is not really an accurate term, but we use the phrase anyway. It is A.A., after all. "The group service number was created as a useful tool for

keeping track of contributions and literature orders. For instance, a group treasurer might send in a contribution for the 'Twelve and Twelve Group.' This group might have originally been listed in the records as the 'Monday Night 12 & 12 Group.' The group service number is an easy way for us to match these records. Another example is that many groups have names that sound alike. The group service number helps differentiate these groups from one another as well." For more information about the A.A. group, visit our Central Office.

## From the Grapevine

"As drinking alcoholics, we all ran from life and toward death. When we join AA, we reverse the process - we give ourselves to life as it is, rather than as we would like it to be."

## Help!, Help!, Help!, Help!

Want to get some good "press" for your group, and at the same time let other A.A.ers know what's going on? If you have news that might be of interest to others in the program, put a short piece (maximum 300 words) together and send it to [newsletter@aasrq.org](mailto:newsletter@aasrq.org).

**Volunteers are always needed for 12 Step calls. Contact Central Office at 358-4818 or visit the website at [aasrq.org](http://aasrq.org).**

## Dear Alkie

- ◆ Dear Alkie: I've been trying for years and years to quit drinking, but I can't figure out why. Do you have any idea why?
- ◆ Alkie: Yep. Because you can't fix the mind you have with the mind you have!!
- ◆ Dear Alkie: I know I should go to your stupid meetings, but you don't understand how inconvenient they are for me. And I keep hearing you people say to "do the Steps", but I just don't have time now. Got some other way to help me?
- ◆ Alkie: I had to remove the "yea, but," "I know" and "you don't understand" from my vocabulary before I could be helped.
- ◆ Dear Alkie: I'm thinking about doing your Steps, but I can tell you right now I don't have time to help others, which I see your 12 Step talks about. Can I skip that one?
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Dear Alkie: I heard somewhere that I could just "fake it till I make it". Does that apply to this sponsor thing too?
- ◆ Alkie: The big difference between saying you have a sponsor and having a sponsor is using a sponsor.
- ◆ Dear Alkie: I'm afraid to get a sponsor. I'm afraid that when I tell him about myself he'll not like me, and that he won't want to help me.
- ◆ Alkie: A.A. is full of wonderful people who have themselves gone through hell and are now willing to help others. My experience is that those who judge don't matter, and those who matter don't judge.

# ANNIVERSARIES

Groups: email birthdays to [newsletter@asrq.org](mailto:newsletter@asrq.org) and put ANNIVERSARIES in the subject line. Cutoff for the newsletter is the last day of the month. Do not send anniversaries for future months: i.e. October anniversaries appear in November.

## 63RD AVENUE

### December

Judy S. 14 years  
Eileen Q. 10 years  
Debbie VB. 3 years  
Corinne B. 1 year

## BEE RIDGE EAST

### December

Ursula K. 25 years

## FRIENDS OF THE PELICAN

### December

Kathy B. 17 years  
Ben R. 3 years

## HAPPY COOKIE HOUR

### December

Karen E. 31 years  
Chris K. 24 years  
Toby 10 years  
Maribeth 9 years  
Deb M. 9 years  
Tina S. 7 years  
Boston Mike 5 years  
Michelle K. 5 years  
John 1 year  
Perry 1 year  
Emily J. 1 year  
Jarad 1 year

## LAKWOOD RANCH 12&12

### December

Bob S. 6 years  
Cindy C. 2 years

## LUNCH BUNCH

### December

Patricia R. 31 years  
Dan B. 30 years

## MONDAY EARLY BIG BOOK

### December

Nancy L. 34 years  
Gretchen J. 21 years  
Kunell W. 17 years  
Kimberly 7 years

## OAK STREET STEP

### December

Dick D. 31 years  
Ellen R. 23 years  
Rich R. 22 years  
Gretchen J. 21 years  
James S. 15 years  
Barbara S. 14 years  
Michael M. 14 years  
Rick F. 12 years  
Yolonde 11 years  
David T. 9 years  
Bob S. 6 years  
Erica F. 1 year

## ST. ARMAND'S

### December

Dick D. 31 years  
Joop 22 years  
Yolande 10 years  
Bob S. 6 years  
Pat P. 6 years  
Donn S. 1 year

## SATURDAY NIGHT SPEAKERS

### September

Greg M. 18 years  
Joe M. 2 years

### October

Mike S. 14 years  
December  
Mike B. 7 years

## SERENITY

### December

Ken M 34 years  
Pete F. 26 years  
Bobby 11 years  
Dane S. 5 years  
Michelle H. 4 years  
Tracy P. 2 years  
Bill Mc. 1 year

## UNDER THE RAINBOW

### December

Patti B. 18 years

## HELPLINE TOTALS DECEMBER 2012

Meeting time/location... 186  
In lieu of 12 step call.....5  
Actual 12 step calls.....9  
Al-Anon Call..... 14  
Special Needs.....1  
Miscellaneous..... 67  
Bridging the Gap.....1  
TOTAL.....283

## HELPLINE 2012 TOTALS YTD

Meeting Time/Location... 1574  
In lieu of 12 Step Call... 50  
Actual 12 Step Call..... 93  
Al-Anon..... 102  
Special Needs..... 8  
Miscellaneous..... 586  
Bridging the Gap... 1  
TOTAL..... 2,414

Please help the Helpline on Saturdays 12 noon-3 p.m. Contact Central Office at 358-4818 or visit the website at [asrq.org](http://asrq.org).



The main 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@asrq.org](mailto:newsletter@asrq.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.