



Sara-Mana Intergroup

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

On the web at aasrq.org



January 2014 Central Office (941-351-4818) Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

Support Needed for fund drive

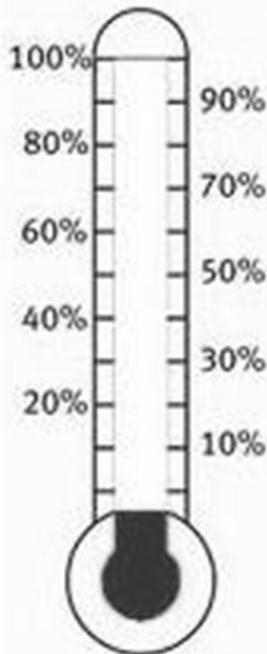
The 2014 fund drive to support our Sara-Mana Central Office is underway. The campaign has a goal of \$28,000 to help the Central Office carry the A.A. message to suffering alcoholics and to provide information about A.A. to the community.

The Sara-Mana Central Office handled 3,409 Helpline inquiries last year, answering 12-step calls, providing referrals to Al-Anon and other actions.

The office also supplies A.A. literature, such as Big Books, Twelve Step books and pamphlets, as well as materials, including medallions for groups.

Many A.A.s know the Central Office best through the facility being made available to the many Intergroup, General Service and other A.A. committees, providing and maintaining a place for A.A. meetings, service organizations and committees to meet, in addition to hosting group meetings.

In addition, the website (aasrq.org) is maintained to provide A.A. information and materials to members and potential members. This monthly



Semantics? Happenstance? Better Clarity? Read this and Find Out

First in a series of a member's look at the steps and their meaning to his sobriety.

We know from our A.A. history that publishing of the Big Book and formulation of the steps was a collaborative effort of our first 100 recovered alcoholics. To be sure, Bill Wilson was the primary author, but the draft was reviewed by the membership.

Objections were raised, suggestions made, clarifications decided on, until final wording was agreed upon.

Given that background, it always seemed significant to me what the final wording or phrasing ended up being. I don't see semantics or happenstance. I see the helping hand of the God of my understanding. When looking at the steps, I've found it to be an instructive exercise to reflect not only on what it says, but also on what isn't said, or why a particular phrase was used. This exercise has been very helpful to me over the years. I hope it provokes

you to reflect in a similar manner, and to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the steps, our blueprint for recovery.

STEP ONE: "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable." Why not "We found we could not control our drinking anymore" or "We were continually getting in serious trouble" or "Drinking has caused us to lose our jobs, our families, and respect in the community?" Denial is the most peculiar aspect of alcoholism. There is not a phase or a stage of denial. It is a weave in the fabric of our disease. We have a disease that tells us we don't have a disease! Since it is essential to our recovery to "get" step one, this step provides two "hooks" to save us. If "powerless" is too strong for you, can you admit your life has become unmanageable? If your denial points to material things you haven't lost yet, how about the fact that you can't stop or stay stopped? It's a two pronged approach to overcome your denial and perceived uniqueness. In my case, I did not think my life was unmanageable because I had a good job and some material trappings. I skipped that part and concentrated on my repeated demonstrations of powerlessness. Only years later in recovery did I recognize how unmanageable my life had been. What I had been accepting for life was no life at all... and it had been hanging together by a thread!

newsletters are funded by and made available to all district groups. Please make a generous gift to support this important campaign. Individual contributions account for 46% of Central Office revenues, with 31% coming from group contributions and 23% from sales of books and other items. And, contributions are tax deductible. Envelopes are available at meetings and the Central Office. If your meeting place doesn't have envelopes, ask your Intergroup rep to get a supply.

Most poignant of all, they wrote the first word in the first step of the program as "We" to ever remind us that together we can do what each of us can not do alone.

By Tom S.

2013 Open House Huge Success

Thanks to everyone who helped in this year's Central Office Open House, the Central Office Board and our many friends who made it possible. Thanks also to our membership for their participation and example.

I came to the office in August of 2006, so this was my 7th open house and in my opinion, this was the best yet. Thank you!

Our idea of having an open house has always been to have a day of unity and fellowship, a day that should never be about sales or money, and this year was no exception to that philosophy.

We had a large number of newcomers attend this year's open house and you were able to show them a glimpse of what we have experienced for ourselves.

Stated on pg. 152 of our book, "I know I must get along without liquor but how can I? Have you a sufficient substitute?"

Yes there is a substitute and it is vastly more than that. IT IS A FELLOWSHIP IN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS.

There you will find release from care, boredom and worry. Your imagination will be fired. Life will mean something at last. The most satisfactory years of your existence lie ahead. Thus we find the fellowship and so will you".

I believe the new people who attended this year felt the spirit of that statement and it was awesome for me to be able to witness it.

"To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a **fellowship** grow up about you, to have a host of friends -- this is an experience you must not miss".

To experience this for yourself in a small way, the 2014 Open House will be on Saturday, December 6th, 2014.

Tony

Quotes borrowed from pg. 89 and 152 Alcoholics Anonymous with permission from AAWS Inc.

YOU need to know this

HAPPY COOKIE HOUR has MOVED to Trinity Methodist Church, 4150 South Shade Avenue in Sarasota. Meetings are on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at 5:30 p.m. The campus, including inside cars, is no smoking.



A THREE-DAY CONFERENCE celebrating the day Bill W. and Dr. Bob first met will be held at the Holiday Inn-Orlando at the International Airport May 2-4. The conference begins at 7 p.m. on Friday and ends with a 10:30 a.m. speaker on Sunday. For more information, check the Central Office website at aasrq.org. Once there, click on "AA Resources" near the top of the page, then "24th Spring Conference."

PARRISH 11th STEP MEDITATION is a NEW OPEN MEETING that meets Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at St Francis Cabrini, 12001 69th St. E., Parrish, FL 34219. The meeting is held in CHARLIE'S HOUSE.

THIRD LEGACY MEN'S GROUP at 7 p.m. on Tuesday has MOVED to Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, 7461 Prospect Road, Sarasota.

SUNRISE GROUP has MOVED and now meets at 7 a.m. at Bahia Vista Menonite Church, 4041 Bahia Vista in Sarasota. Monday thru Saturday meetings are in Room 11 on west side of the building. Sunday meetings are in the rear pavilion.

Could this be anyone you know?

As you may know, some of us, in our drinking days, were known to have brushes with the authorities from time to time on the way home after a "social session" out with friends.

Well, one night after work, I was out with some co-workers and had several cocktails followed by some rather nice red wine. Feeling jolly, I still had the sense to know that I might have been slightly over the limit.

That's when I did something that I've never done before ---- I took a cab home.

Sure enough, on the way home, there was a police road block, but since it was a cab, they waved it past. I arrived home safely without incident.

This was a real surprise as I had never driven a cab before, I don't know where I got it, and now that it was in my garage, I didn't know what to do with it.



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.

You can take this inventory....now

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 "... annual 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

Archives meeting set for Feb. 15

The first annual Florida A.A. Archives Workshop will be held February 15 at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Winter Park.

The full-day event begins with a 9 a.m. breakfast, followed by five 45-minute sessions, and will end with a 4 pm. historical speaker. Workshop topics include getting started in archives, basic archival procedures, digitizing, oral histories, plus copyright and fair use.

Workshop sponsors say the event is committed to helping district, intergroup and area A.A. archivists, chairs of those committees, as well as committee members.

Registration for the free workshop can be made by contacting archives@area15aa.org or archives@aanorthflorida.org.

Guzzling beer a love, until it wasn't

I was the typical beer guzzling Wisconsin girl and I loved it. I dried out in my early 20's so I could keep my job, but afterwards I went right back to it. I continued to drink for 20+ more years and I lost a couple of jobs, but other than that, my life wasn't unmanageable. However, the hangovers were getting really tough and the blackouts were getting longer. And, I knew that I was going to get a drunk driving charge.

The night it finally happened I started drinking early in the afternoon and then drove about three miles to a bar. I closed it up and on my way home I went through a red light (which I have no recollection of) and got pulled over. I remember thinking, "Well this is it! This is the end of the drinking!" I've been sober almost three years and it is so great!

What I learned is that just because you're not chronic doesn't mean you won't be! And, sobriety makes life so much easier!

Dear Alkie

Dear Alkie: What is this "hope" I hear you A.A.'s talking about?

Alkie: Hope is the feeling you have that the feeling you have will eventually go away.

Dear Alkie: OK, but what does that mean? What options does "hope" give me?

Alkie: "Hope" is having one more option than suicide.

Dear Alkie: But why do I have to go through all this?

Alkie: Without the test there would be no testimony; without the despair there would be no hope.

Dear Alkie: Where did you find "hope"?

Alkie: I found hope in the rooms, myself in the Steps, and God in my heart.

Dear Alkie: At what point in doing the Steps did you first get hope?

Alkie: Step 2 is when we intuitively know that everything will be all right.

Dear Alkie: What is this "spirituality" you guys speak about? Am I going to have to join a monastery?

Alkie: Spirituality is about being whole, not holy.

Dear Alkie: How am I supposed to "find God"?

Alkie: If we are honest, open and willing, we don't have to worry about finding God; He'll find us!

Dear Alkie: I don't have time to join A.A. now, I've got too many problems I've got to deal with first.

Alkie: Quit working on yourself! Look at the mess you've already made--let God do it for you!!!

ANNIVERSARIES

Groups: email birthdays to 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. December anniversaries appear in January.

63RD AVENUE

December
Suzanne G. 26 years
Judy S. 15 years
Eileen Q. 11 years
Debbie VB 4 years
Corinne B. 2 years

ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

December
Karen E. 32 years
Elaine 31 years
Jeff B. 11 years

BEE RIDGE EAST

December
Ursula K 26 years

DONUT HOUR

December
Charlie R. 16 years
Louise S. 6 years
Wendy 5 years
John M. 4 years
Scott K. 4 years
Michael N. 2 years

EARLY BIG BOOK

December
Nancy L. 35 years
Ursula K. 26 years
Gretchen J. 22 years
Kunell W. 18 years
Kimberly 8 years
Candy 1 year
Dan P. 1 year

FRIENDS OF THE PELICAN

November
Tom M. 4 years
December
Kathy B. 18 years
Skip P. 13 years
Ben R. 4 years

GULF GATE NOON

November
Art F. 24 years
Chris L. 7 years
Marita 4 years

December

Jim S. 20 years
Jack V. 17 years
Elizabeth F. 3 years

LAKWOOD RANCH 12&12

December
Cindy C. 3 years

MONDAY NIGHT MEN'S

December
Fred P. 26 years
Tony C. 23 years
John D. 16 years
Mike R. 12 years

NORTH RIVER MONDAY NITE

December
Rene S. 56 years
Paul U. 29 years
Bobby T. 12 years

OAK STREET

December
Dick D. 32 years
Rich R. 23 years
Gretchen J. 22 years
David T. 20 years
James S. 16 years
Barbara S. 15 years
Michael N. 15 years
Rick F. 13 years
Yolande 12 years
Tina S. 8 years
Bob S. 7 years
Erica F. 2 years

ST. ARMAND'S

December
Dick D. 32 years
Joop V. 23 years
Yolande W. 11 years
Bob S. 7 years
Pat P. 7 years
Lisa M. 6 years
Bob M. 5 years
Donn S. 2 years

SERENITY

December
Ken M. 35 years
Pete F. 27 years
Joe P. 8 years
Dane S. 6 years
John B. 5 years
Tracy P. 3 years

SATURDAY NIGHT SPEAKERS

December
Mike B. 8 years

SUNRISE

December
John Q. 36 years
Morey B. 28 years
Susie T. 15 years
Al R. 4 years
Bernard G. 2 years
Steven Y. 2 years

UNDER THE RAINBOW

December
Patti B. 19 years
Katie B. 1 year

Get your Sara-Mana Newsletter emailed to you in a PDF format each month. Email igsecretary@asrq.org and ask to be on the list.

A GRAPEVINE

Quote of the Day

"As I trudge the Road of Happy Destiny, A.A. holds my left hand, God holds my right, and I have no hands left to pick up a drink."

No kidding!

As a man obviously ready for the program was driving down the motorway, his car phone rang. Answering, he heard his wife's voice urgently warning him, "Vernon, I just heard on the news that there's a car going the wrong way on 175. Please be careful!"

"Hell," said Vernon, "It's not just one car. It's hundreds of them!"

A GRAPEVINE

Quote of the Day

"My past sobriety is not a ticket to future sobriety. I have to pay that fare and make the decision to recover daily."

HELPLINE TOTALS

December 2014

Call count..... 221
BREAKDOWN:
Meeting time/location.180
In lieu of 12 step call..... 16
Actual 12 step calls..... 5
Al-Anon Call..... 9
Special Needs..... 0
Miscellaneous.....11
Spanish Helpline..... 2
Please HELP your district Helpline carry the message. The calls come to you and the only requirement is one year of continuous sobriety. Our volunteers fielded a total of 3,409 calls in 2013. Please HELP be the voice of HOPE in this New Year. Contact Patrick O. at (941) 351-4818.

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. 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.