



Sara-Mana Intergroup

P.O. BOX 3075

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



October 2012 Central Office (941-351-4818) Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

Happiness after 16 years and 3 DUIs

By anonymous

Had you asked me ten years ago if I had an alcohol problem, I'd have said you're crazy. Now, reflecting on the early history of my alcoholism, the writing was clearly on the wall.

I had my first DUI in 1996, swearing it was just a mistake and that I would never put myself in that situation again. I never gave attention to the slow downward spiral of despair developing.

By 2006, I was going in and out of detox centers, but then came some hope. One of the counselors said that to stay sober, I should try attending 90 A.A. meetings in 90 days. Unfortunately, mine was a shallow beginning, and while I learned and committed myself to the fact that I was allergic to alcohol, it was also a disease, and relapse for me was eminent. I rapidly went through what I thought was the best solution, and this is where one can never underestimate the insane thinking of an alcoholic.

Thinking too much would eventually pull me back to where I started over and over again. I became over confident and clouded my judgment by thinking I had completed the program. I got my second DUI a year later. Again, I was drawn to A.A. for help and guidance. I was attending meetings and listening, but not truly grasping the wholeness of A.A.

After two and a half years of sobriety, the insanity crept back into my head, thinking I was strong enough to conquer it alone. I was rudely awakened when by midyear, I started giving myself reasons to fail again, as though this was a means to

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Gratitude: that's what it's all about

A.A. members in the Sara-Mana group area will celebrate gratitude at the 2012 Gratitude Dinner on November 15. The dinner is a highlight of our year and it is expected that hundreds will turn out that evening at the Sarasota Municipal Auditorium (see address below) for fellowship, to have a tasty meal and to

hear "Grateful" Eddie, a rousing speaker on alcoholism.



"Gratitude." You'll find it on page 95 in Step Ten in the 12 & 12. You'll get more than 69 million hits on it if you Google the word, and it seems to come up

more than any other topic in group discussion meetings. The word has been in use for more than 600 years.

Gratitude means the quality or feeling of being grateful or thankful, and who could be more grateful or thankful than an alcoholic who has found A. A. and is in recovery.

Step Ten tells us, "An honest regret for harms done, a genuine gratitude for blessings received, and a willingness to try for better things tomorrow will be the permanent assets we shall seek."

Why this concentration on gratitude? It's certainly a positive emotion. Gratitude has also been said to have one of the strongest links with mental health of any character trait. Numerous studies suggest that grateful people are more likely to have higher levels of happiness and lower levels of stress and depression. Sound familiar?

The link between spirituality and gratitude has recently become a popular subject of study. While these two characteristics are certainly not dependent on each other, studies have found that spirituality is capable of enhancing a person's ability to be grateful.

See the piece at left for more details on tickets, available at the Central Office.

Anniversaries. Anniversaries. Get them to the newsletter for member recognition.

Don't miss seeing your anniversaries in the newsletter. Email them by month's end to this address: newsletter@asrq.org.

Gratitude Dinner tickets on sale at Central Office

Tickets for the November 15 Gratitude Dinner can be purchased for \$15 each at the Sara-Mana Central Office, located at Suite B-2, 1748 Independence Blvd. (off U.S. 301) in Sarasota. The office is open Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event will start at 5:30 p.m. in the Municipal Auditorium, 801 North Tamiami Trail in Sarasota.

In addition to individual tickets, group purchases are encouraged so members can be seated together. So, take those orders and rush to the Central Office for tickets.

The dinner will feature roasted turkey, stuffing, red potatoes, green beans and locally baked bread. A vegetarian ticket option is available for those who don't eat meat. Please get tickets by Nov. 1.

Beginner's Blog

By Diane R.

As beginners entering the rooms of A.A., we are advised, "Don't drink! Go to a meeting." Wise advice, indeed. But for many a newcomer, there can seem to be a space as large and vast as the universe between him/herself and that phrase "Don't drink!" How on earth do we not drink? How do we resist intense cravings in those first few days and weeks? "Just avoid the first drink," we hear. Yes, we nod. But how?

Here are some simple suggestions. First, know that you are going to be okay. Tell yourself that frequently and believe it! Second, it is very important to have alternatives at the ready, both in the home and to carry with you throughout the day. Many of us have found chocolate, something salty, or both are very helpful. If the craving comes, take a bite or more of either or both. Most likely all you have had in your home to drink is alcohol and caffeinated beverages. Make sure you have ginger ale (or non-caffeinated soft drinks), decaf coffee, water or juices on hand to drink when you get thirsty. Green/black tea does have caffeine so keep that in mind if you are having the jitters.

Now for some actions to take if those thoughts and cravings hit you. Call someone. Even if you don't have phone numbers of A.A. members or a sponsor, call a friend. Better yet, call the A.A. helpline at 351-4818. It is manned 24/7 by sober A.A.s.

Pray to a Higher Power, of your understanding. Even if you don't yet truly believe in one, do it anyway and just ask for help. If you cannot get to a meeting room, log on to the site www.e-aa.org/chat.php and share that you are trying to not drink. Most importantly, promise yourself you will "not take that first drink" for 24 hours only. In a little while the craving will pass.

Stay calm. Sit there and be still. Relax. Meditate. Easy does it. If there is a meeting: listen, listen, listen. Identify with what you hear, but

YOU need to know this

Be Yourself Group, meeting Saturday at 1 p.m., has disbanded.

But For The Grace of God is a new group, meeting Monday at 7 p.m. at Faith Church 1201 N. Beneva, Sarasota.

Living Sober, which met Wednesday at the Salvation Army, Bradenton, has disbanded.

New Women has moved and now meets at 11 a.m. on Saturday at Church of the Cross, 5051 26th St. W, Bradenton.

No Nonsense Men's is a new meeting, Wednesday at 7 p.m., Restoration Fellowship Church, 5614 Richardson Rd., Sarasota.

Oasis Group now meets at 11 a.m., Monday thru Saturday at VFW, 124 S. Tuttle Ave. in Sarasota.

Remember When Group, meeting on Sunday at 7 p.m., is moving to the Salvation Army, 1746 South Tuttle in Sarasota.

Saturday Friendship Group has disbanded.

Saturday Palmetto Men's Group, is now **Principles Before Personalities**, a Saturday 7 p.m. open discussion meeting at Hope Church, 1701 10th Street West in Palmetto.

Sober Living Group on Monday has a new meeting time: 5:30 p.m. in the Garden Room at St. Thomas More Church, 2506 Gulf Gate Drive in Sarasota.

Wednesday 6 p.m. Step Group is a new meeting, at Unity Church 3023 Proctor Rd., Sarasota

You're needed at the jail. Can you spare one hour a week to take a meeting into women and men in the recovery pods or one hour a month to those inmates in general population? One year of sobriety and clearance from SCJ will get you to an orientation after which you'll be part of a dedicated group of A.A. volunteers. Please step up to this request and email scjpod@aasrq.org.

The Fall Barbeque scheduled for Sat., Oct. 20, has been postponed until Saturday, November 3. Main Street Men's Group is the sponsor.

First Step's Mothers and Infants program needs women with a year or more of sobriety to take meetings into their locked facility. If you are free one or two nights each month, please contact Lynne R. at 941.320.8389 or ldross@comcast.net.



3 for October

Step 10

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

Tradition 10

Alcoholics Anonymous has no opin-

ion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Concept 10

Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.

don't compare.

"Don't drink! Go to a meeting" is great advice. It's been used for decades—it works. However, as a new person who desires to stop drinking, it can seem impossible to stay away from that first drink. It is not impossible. You can do it! You will do it! One day at a time.

***Whether you are new to A.A. and our program or a member with many days or years, if you have suggestions that worked for you in your very first days, please write to newsletter@aasrq.org and share what you did, so that others may benefit here in the new column: Beginner's Blog. Next issue-HALT.*

We are the purveyors of His goodness

God in His wisdom selected this group of men and women to be the purveyors of His goodness. In selecting them through whom to bring about this phenomenon, He went not to the proud, the mighty, the famous or the brilliant. He went instead to the humble, to the sick, to the unfortunate. He went right to the drunkard, the so-called weakling of the world. Well might He have said to us, "Unto your weak and feeble hands I have entrusted power beyond estimate. To you has been given that which has been denied the most learned of your fellows. Not to scientists or to statesmen, not to wives or mothers, not even to priests or ministers have I given this gift of healing other alcoholics which I entrust to you.

"It must be used unselfishly: it carries with it a grave responsibility. No day can be too long; no demands upon your time can be too urgent; no case too pitiful; no task too hard; no effort too great. It must be used with tolerance for I have restricted its application to no specific race, no creed, and no denomination. Personal criticism you must expect; lack of appreciation will be common; ridicule will be your lot; your motives will be misjudged. You must be prepared for adversity, for what men call adversity is the ladder you must use to ascend the rungs toward spiritual perfection. Remember, in the exercise of this power, I shall not exact from you beyond your capabilities.

"You are not selected because of exceptional talents, and be careful always, if success attends your efforts, not to ascribe to personal superiority that to which you can lay claim only by virtue of my gift. Had I wanted learned men to accomplish this mission, the power would have been entrusted to the physician and scientist. Had I wanted eloquent men, there would have been many anxious for the assignment, for talk

is the easiest used of all talents with which I have endowed mankind. Had I wanted scholarly men, the world is filled with better qualified men than you who are available.

You were selected because you have been the outcasts of the world; your long experience as drunkards has made or should make you humbly alert to the cries of distress that come from the lonely hearts of all alcoholics.

"Keep in mind the admission you made on the day of your profession in A.A., namely that you are powerless and that it was only with your willingness to turn your life and will unto My keeping that relief came to you."

*Thanks to a near-40-year
A.A. member for sharing
this with readers*

October Limerick

There was a young woman in
trouble
with drinking; life turned into rubble.
Worked the steps of A.A.,
doesn't drink for today,
her life turned around on the
double.

Happiness after, from page 1
the end. After another six months of repetitious behavior and the flux between pills and alcohol, I ended up in a 30-day program.

Being in that program placed me on the path of complete and honest surrender. I learned we have the opportunity to make choices in our lives; unfortunately one could have eventually caused my death if I kept allowing it to take hold. However, by the grace of God and with the help of this program, it has kept me on a path of sobriety. This is a difficult journey, best traveled with the help of God, sponsors and meetings. My life today is filled with a great sense of peace and helping others hopefully find this way of life.

Dear Alkie

"Alkie" is one of our long-time members who believes as the Big Book says, that we are not a glum lot. Email your questions regarding our fellowship and/or recovery to newsletter@aaqrq.org.

Hi out there. I've been asked to continue my rambling in the Sara-Mana newsletter. Many (OK, one of you) asked what it was like when I was drinking? Here's what I recall:

- ⇒ In the final stage of my drinking, I never got to where I wanted to be until I didn't know where I was!
- ⇒ I never had a problem that was as bad as my alcoholic solution.
- ⇒ I used three forms of denial: (1) If I don't think about it, it will go away; (2) If I don't remember it, it didn't happen; (3) If I ignore it, it can't hurt me!
- ⇒ The only time I ever refused a drink was when I misunderstood the question.
- ⇒ I had only two resentments: God and other human beings.
- ⇒ I confused agitation for excitement, which is why I feared sobriety would be dull.
- ⇒ Arrogance, self-centeredness, and the illusion of control were my most prominent characteristics.
- ⇒ I had conflicting feelings of shame and blame.
- ⇒ Alcohol never made me happy; it just made me think I'd be happy in 15 minutes.
- ⇒ I thought a lot about myself but not much of myself.
- ⇒ I thought drinking made me more interesting to you because I knew it made you more interesting to me.
- ⇒ Social drinking? That's getting drunk in front of people rather than alone.

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. September anniversaries appear in October.

63RD AVENUE

September

Group anniversary 40 years
Leslie W. 28 years
Marta B. 15 years
Rich M. 14 years
Steve H. 9 years
Tom W. 4 years

ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

June

Joe G. 29 years
Laura W. 29 years
Louise C. 17 years
Karin S. 10 years
Matthew S. 6 years

July

Tom T. 30 years
John W. 23 years
Fran C. 10 years
Michael T. 8 years

August

Jens A. 3 years

September

Bill D. 34 years
Lynn D. 8 years

BEE RIDGE EAST

September

Greg A. 32 years
Tom L. 28 years
Mallory B. 23 years
Joanne M. 20 years
Cindy P. 18 years

DONUT HOUR

September

Joan M. 38 years
Susan O. 33 years
David L. 30 years
Jean W. 23 years
Maria T. 6 years
Lydia A. 2 years
Arnold 1 year

FRIENDS OF THE PELICAN

August

Jody G. 15 years
Joe R. 12 years

Amanda W. 3 years

September

Kate A. 33 years
Paul P. 22 years

FRIDAY NITE LITE

July

Shirley P. 18 years
Reid K. 1 year

September

Rafael P. 21 years

HAPPY COOKIE HOUR

August

David S. 32 years
Dolores 23 years
Eric 23 years
Marilyn 17 years
Bob C. 13 years
Molly B. 12 years
Lisa F. 11 years
Nicky 2 years
Kim 1 year

September

Joan Mc. 38 years
Paul 18 years
Dennis K. 11 years
Lolly R. 10 years
Larry D. 5 years
Larry M. 3 years
John H. 2 years

KEEP IT SIMPLE MENS

August

Don W. 21 years
Rick P. 4 years
Stewart R. 3 years
Charlie S. 3 years
Joe K. 2 years
Mike W. 1 year

LAKWOOD RANCH 12 & 12

STUDY

September

Tom S. 19 years
Ron M. 3 years
John W. 2 years
Denise 1 year
Kristen W. 1 year

LUNCH BUNCH

August

Veronica H. 26 years
Jed A. 1 year

September

Joan Mc. 38 years
Denise F. 20 years
Lynn M. 14 years
Amanda M. 1 year

NEW WOMEN

August

Cyndy C. 19 years
Debbie R. 14 years
September
Rosemarie V. 26 years
Janet T. 22 years
Susan L. 13 years

PRIMARY PORPOISE

September

Bob G. 28 years

SERENITY

September

Janet T. 22 years
Frank S. 6 years
Wendy M. 5 years
Meredith K. 5 years
Valerie K. 1 year

SINGLENESSE OF PURPOSE

September

Coleen H. 28 years
Leroy S. 28 years
Peder J. 21 years
Cindy K. 6 years
John H. 4 years
Colleen B. 2 years

ST. ARMAND'S

July

Joan D. 34 years
LuAnn 33 years
Dave S. 9 years
Robyn D. 9 years
Bill D. 9 years
Mitchell B. 4 years

August

Erwin B. 28 years
Brian L. 18 years
Loretta B. 4 years

SUNRISE

September

Bill E. 30 years
Kim K. 30 years
Marty F. 25 years
Paul W. 18 years
Patti F. 7 years
Dan L. 4 years
Daren W. 3 years
Jeff M. 2 years
Rowena 1 year

UNDER THE RAINBOW

September

Jessie R. 25 years
Mark S. 13 years
Lollie R. 10 years
Michael M. 9 years

HELPLINE TOTALS

September 2012

Call count 136

BREAKDOWN:

Meeting time/location	85
In lieu of 12 step call	2
Actual 12 step calls	3
Al-Anon Call	13
Special Needs	0
Miscellaneous	33

The Helpline needs members willing to be on the 12-step call list. Please contact the Helpline through our website or Robert Q. at 351-4818.

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.