



Sara-Mana Intergroup

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

On the web at aasrq.org

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.

October 2013

Central Office (941-351-4818)

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

Getting to know Mom

After seven days in detox, Mom took me home. As soon as I got in the car I felt relieved, .

I learned about alcoholism , riding a bus to detox every day except Sundays. Evenings I attended A.A. meetings; 12 days later I entered residential rehab.

Mom bought me clothes that fit and took me to rehab. For the first family visit I, full of anger and shame, did not want Mom to come. By the next week I needed cigarettes so she brought me a carton. At the next visit I didn't need her, but by the last visit I wanted her to come, and she was there for me. I told her how sorry I was, but my mom had heard all this many times before. On the 35th day, she took me home.

For the next week I attended A.A. in the morning and went to outpatient rehab by bus. Mom would get me at the Gratitude Room. I spent 12-15 hours in recovery each day. Rehab ended and I was home alone between meetings.

Mom retired. Between meetings, I was no longer alone. Who was this woman who allowed me in her home? One day at a time I let Mom into my life. I no longer *had* to cook for her, but *wanted* to share a meal, laugh and cry with her. I had walked away so many times, and she'd had plenty of chances to give up on me, but never did.

At the airport a few months later, I looked at the woman next to me in the car and said, "It's been wonderful getting to know you, Mom." Then she looked at me and said, "It's been nice getting to know you, too." Then the tears started.

By Tonne N.

The Macabre Puppeteer: a scary one

New York City's Ed Sullivan Theatre was around the corner from where I worked in the 1980s.

In the depths of my disease, I imagined the theatre showcasing the insanity of my addiction, as I stood under the theatre's marquee that read "The Demise of Me." As I drifted into the lobby, I heard Chopin's farewell waltz. It was as sad and as ominous as the last ten years of my drinking. Darkness beckoned.

Center stage revealed my alcoholism manifested as a macabre puppeteer -- half as the angry apparition from the Wizard

of Oz and half as Cesar Romero's maniacally grinning Joker from the Batman series of the 1960's. The puppeteer cackled thunderously.

As I struggled to escape the nightmare on stage, I stumbled past the orchestra pit where, to my horror, I saw the fate of thousands of alcoholics before me ... lifeless bodies with limbs grotesquely entangled in their anonymous grave.

Suddenly, in a moment of clarity, I became aware of my role in the horrible scene. In that instant, bright light beamed into the theatre from the street beyond. Willing and hopeful, relieved of the weight of denial, I ran down the center aisle through the doors and into the light.

Today, after 35 years of drinking, I have finally surrendered to my alcoholism. With strength gathered from so many near-victims like myself, I make a choice every day to follow certain Steps as my program of recovery. Sober and ever-hopeful, I love living in the bright light of happiness and joy with freedom from self-will which almost led to "The Demise of Me."

by Anonymous

Graveyard Shots

About three years before my alcoholism brought me to my



knees, I went to an after-work Halloween party. I remember the host serving "graveyard" Jello shots from a mixing bowl. The Jello was

black and the main ingredients were various hard liquors. I remember trying one and chasing it with beer. I don't remember taking any more shots, but ... The first black shot is the last thing I remember of that night. That brief flash of recall lives in my sober mind as one of the scariest things I ever did in my life. Today, thanks to the gifts of A.A., I do not have to put myself at such risk ever again.

GRAPEVINE

Quote of the day

"I've never taken my sobriety for granted because I know I'm only one drink away from ruining my life."

Finding A.A. at sea

In Vancouver, my husband and I spent three nights in old downtown. We found an A.A. meeting near our hotel for uplifting mid-day breaks from sightseeing.

Embarking the fourth day on a cruise to Alaska, we scanned the schedule for "Friends of Bill W" meetings. We went early to the appointed place, waiting for other alcoholics to join us. A.A. meetings on cruises always add joy and meaning to our trips.

Some of these have produced long-term friendships. My favorite was Carrie P. We found each other on a transatlantic trip at a Scrabble challenge. I blurted, "I am a recovering alcoholic." She asked if I went to 12-step meetings, and I murmured, "Yes." She said, "Me, too!" Throughout the cruise, we met every morning at 6 a.m. to play and at 5 p.m. for A.A.

My husband's most memorable friend boarded in South America. Derrick B. had been a successful Las Vegas entertainer. Now, sweating, shaking, on his third day dry, he opened up about his alcoholic decline. The A.A.s tag-teamed Derrick from boarding until disembarking, attending his morning rehearsals in the smoking zone. After three years, Derrick is sober, a career back on track, reunited with his estranged daughter.

So, this August, we went to the meeting place just hours after leaving Vancouver. No one showed after 20 minutes, so we went back to our cabin, disappointed. Next day we returned, at least for a two-person Big Book meeting. We were well into "The Doctor's Opinion," when Darleen W. appeared. She had long-term sobriety, but was battling another serious illness and needed support. We met daily and went ashore in Juneau to an A.A. clubhouse for a change of pace between salmon and glaciers.

Halfway through the cruise, we wonder if anyone else will join us. But if no one else comes to the shipboard meetings, we have each other and the Big Book. We are never alone.

Gayla F.

YOU need to know this

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS GROUP, that meets at 7 p.m. on Friday is **MOVING** to West Coast Church of the Cross at 3005 S. Tuttle.

The 164PLUS STUDY GROUP, which met on Thursday at St. Armand's Lutheran Church, has **DISBANDED**.

REMEMBER WHEN GROUP now meets on Sunday at Concordia Lutheran Church, 2185 Wood Street, Sarasota, at 7 p.m.

MIDNIGHT HOUR GROUP continues to meet at West Coast Church of the Cross, 3005 S. Tuttle Avenue, Sarasota. A change of address was mistakenly reported in the August issue.

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**.

The **NEW WOMEN'S GROUP** meeting on Saturday mornings has now moved to Saturday afternoons at 2:30 p.m. at the Church of the Cross, 5051 26th St. West in Bradenton. The location is still the same - it's just the time that's changed. Please come and join us. The format has changed also. The first Saturday is a 12/12 meeting, the last Saturday is a speaker meeting and the other Saturdays are readings from the Daily Reflections along with sharing from the readings.

For up-to-date changes please check the website Where & When at aasrq.org. Click on the meeting tab at the top of the page.



2013 GRATITUDE DINNER

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2013

5:30 Fellowship, 6:30 Dinner, 8:00 Speaker

Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, 4041 Bahia Vista, Sarasota

(Tickets @ \$15 are available at the Central Office.)

Speaker: Karen R. from St. Petersburg (*Crossing the River of Denial* in the Big Book)

All food and beverage included in price. Dinner prepared by Chef Paul.

3 for October

Step 10

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

Tradition 10

Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion 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.

Service: vital to personal recovery

Our twelfth Step - carrying the message - is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives: this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore A.A. is more than a set of principles: it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die.

A.A. service can be anything. It can be making a 12-step call in the middle of the night or speaking to a newcomer after a meeting. Service can be as simple as making coffee for a meeting and as helpful as guiding an alcoholic to another A.A. meeting. There are several forms of service in the Sarasota/Bradenton area. The H & I committee (Hospitals & Institutions) has many opportunities for service. Whether it's facilitating a meeting at one of the local jails or one of the local treatment facilities or whether the service is performed by individuals, groups, areas, or A.A. as a whole, these services are vital to our existence and growth.

In order for A.A. to continue to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, we must perform service. If we all were to stop performing service, A.A. as a whole would dwindle and die.

If you have one year of sobriety and are interested in performing service, check out the H&I website at aasrq.org/HI.htm and click on "volunteers needed.":

Portions of the above are from A.A.'s Legacy of Service by Bill W.

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

2014 General Service budget proposed

The 2014 General Service proposed budget, to be voted upon at the meeting, Saturday, October 19, may now be examined in detail by:

- ♦ Going to the 'aasrq.org' website,
- ♦ Obtaining a copy from your GSR or
- ♦ Requesting via e-mail from: 'finance@aasrq.org'.

The budget reflects actual operating experience over the last few years, and shows a 0.3% increase overall for fiscal 2014, while projected group contributions of \$21,000 are 2.4% below 2013.

General Service exists in large part to aid and assist 12th step work that is impossible for individual A.A.s or for groups to do themselves, and District 4 trusted servants have been increasingly active in the primary mission of 'passing it on' and getting the message of recovery into the community. Hence, funding for both the PI/CPC and H&I committees is still strong, averaging 24% of operating expenses in the last three years.

The Events Committee has adopted cost saving measures without sacrificing the importance or quality of their sponsored events.

The Archives Committee continues its work in the time consuming task of 'recording' our extensive publications library. DCM/ACMs and all committee chairs have been regularly attending quarterly assemblies, which costs are also reflected in the budget.

The Finance Committee encourages all to review and vote on the 2014 General Service budget.

District 4...where service is our CORE.

Dear Alkie

Dear Alkie: Give me one good reason I should join Alcoholics Anonymous if I'm an alcoholic?
Alkie: If you continue drinking and manage not to die, you'll suffer horribly until you do!

Dear Alkie: When you were drinking alcoholically, weren't you afraid of dying?

Alkie: I wasn't afraid of dying, I just didn't want to be present for it.

Dear Alkie: How could you possibly have concluded that you were an alcoholic? I thought you were living on Longboat Key when you joined A. A.

Alkie: If you're living in a resort community, a water view doesn't count if it's from under a bridge.

Dear Alkie: How did you know your social drinking was becoming alcoholic drinking?

Alkie: When my social drinking was with whomever was on TV.

Dear Alkie: What led you to believe you might be alcoholic?

Alkie: My life was unmanageable when I was drinking and when I was not.

Dear Alkie: Anything else?

Alkie: I was always engaged in a life or death competition with people who didn't even know there was a contest going on.

Dear Alkie: I can't drink in the glamorous, dignified way those in ads and movies do. Can you help me preserve my dignity while drinking?

Alkie: Alcohol preserves most things; but not dignity!

Dear Alkie: I heard someone say that alcoholic drinking had three stages. Do you know what they are?

Alkie: Alcoholic drinking's three stages: impulsive; compulsive; repulsive.

Dear Alkie: When I'm drunk I'm really able to see how rotten others behave. What's wrong with that?

Alkie: The epitome of self-righteousness is a drunk experiencing moral outrage over someone else's bad behavior!

ANNIVERSARIES

Groups: email birthdays to newsletter@aaarsq.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**
Leslie W. 29 years
Marta B. 16 years
Steve H. 10 years
Tom W. 5 years

**ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT
September**
Bill D. 35 years
Kim K. 31 years
David D. 30 years
Steve L. 24 years
Lynn D. 9 years

**BEE RIDGE EAST
September**
Greg A. 33 years
Tom L. 29 years
Mallory B. 24 years
Joanne M. 21 years
Cyndi P. 19 years
Ed 16 years

**DONUT HOUR
August**
Lee R. 33 years
Veronica H. 27 years
Jim M. 4 years
Valerie M. 4 years
Kathy A. 3 years
Mike W. 2 years
Chris G. 2 years
Tyler B. 1 year
September
Joan M. 39 years
David L. 37 years
Susan O. 34 years
Jean W. 24 years
Pamela A. 16 years
Maria T. 7 years
David I. 3 years

**FRIENDS OF THE PELICAN
September**
Paul P. 23 years
Susan B. 10 years

**FROM THE HEART
September**
Sandy C. 3 years

**GULF GATE NOON
September**
Ben S. 32 years
Jody K. 28 years

Glenn P. 22 years
Cyndi P. 19 years
Peggy B. 10 years
Timothy 2 years

**LAKWOOD RANCH 12&12
September**
Ron M. 4 years
John W. 3 years
Kristin W. 2 years

**LUNCH BUNCH
September**
Joan 39 years
Grateful Eddie 37 years
Mike H. 27 years
Denise F. 21 years
Fred B. 1 year

**OAK STREET
September**
Joan H. 34 years
MJ R. 25 years
Paul W. 19 years
Rhonda G. 8 years
Michael S. 6 years
Wendy M. 6 years

**REMEMBER WHEN
September**
Kelly B. 18 years
Judy B. 6 years
Milan 4 years

**SATURDAY NIGHT SPEAKERS
September**
Greg M. 19 years
Joe M. 3 years

**ST. ARMAND'S NOON
September**
Ruth G. 32 years
Paul W. 19 years
Tracey D. 19 years
Terry C. 18 years
Sharon K. 15 years
David D. 11 years

**SERENITY
September**
Doug G. 26 years
Janet T. 23 years
Wendy M. 6 years
Jim M. 6 years
Meredith K. 6 years

**SOBER LIVING
September**
Ruth G. 32 years

**SUNRISE
August**
Phil F. 30 years
Daniel S. 24 years
Bob S. 21 years
David B. 21 years
Brian K. 17 years
David B. 7 years
Jens A. 4 years
Rey C. 4 years
Martina C. 3 years
David F. 2 years
Kyle H. 2 years
September

Bill E. 31 years
Kim K. 31 years
Marty F. 26 years
Paul W. 19 years
Dan L. 5 years
Daren W. 4 years
Jeff M. 3 years
Rowena 2 years

**UNDER THE RAINBOW
September**
Jessie R. 26 years
Michael M. 10 years
Ron M. 4 years

HELPLINE TOTALS September 2013

Call count246

BREAKDOWN:

Meeting time/location ..166

In lieu of 12 step call21

Actual 12 step call14

Al-Anon17

Special Needs0

Miscellaneous46

Spanish Helpline2

Please contact Central Office at (941) 351-4848 if you are willing to be a Helpline volunteer or on our 12 Step call list.

KICKSTART!

Two years into sobriety, I found myself questioning the importance of attending meetings, calling my sponsor and reading A.A. materials. I became complacent with my program. I would attend a meeting if it was convenient, I would call my sponsor if I felt like it, and I would read if there was time available. More often than not, I would make excuses for not doing these simple "daily maintenance" tasks. I was not being vigilant, as I have been told to be.

One day, I ran into an old friend at a women's meeting. I confessed to her that I had grown bored in my program. She suggested that I attend new meetings and also recommended that I start my 12 steps a second time, this time through a Big Book study. I truly enjoyed meeting new people and attending new meetings. Also, I had never read the Big Book cover to cover, so I liked the assignment. As I became involved again, I was offered opportunities for service. I spoke at an A.A. meeting and began to sponsor a few women. I investigated other forms of service such as: volunteering at the high school, the mothers and infants program and the A.A. Hotline. I am grateful that service opportunities, new meetings and my Big Book study all helped me kickstart my A.A. program once again.

By Janet W.

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@aaarsq.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.