



On the web at aasrq.org

Sara-Mana Intergroup

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

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 differ-
ence.

OCTOBER 2014

Central Office (941) 951-4818

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

She Decided to End it All, And Then . . .

By Jay A.

After an earlier venture in A.A. where it took me 4 years to finally get in 14 months of sobriety, I went back out and things spun totally out of control - hospitalizations, jails, fights, marital and employment problems, sleeplessness, suicidal and homicidal tendencies. What happened? I don't know for sure, but something I can only explain as a miracle.

After an extended binge I found myself alone and sick and tired of being sick and tired and made a decision to end it all. It was at that moment of decision that I heard a distinct voice say my name and utter, "You have had your last drink!" And I believed it!

To this day I have not had a conscious desire for a drink (30 years last August), but realize my reprieve is only one day at a time.

Then and Now—Part 2

Long-Time Member Notes Changes in A.A.

By Carol K.

The author of this second part of a two-part series has more than 40 years in A.A. and reflects on the changes she has seen over the years in Sarasota's practice of the program..

There's a definite contrast from 1970 A.A. to 2014 A.A.

Then: We found meetings by calling our central office and getting a meeting list, sometimes through C.O., sometimes available at meetings. We had the telephone and letter writing to communicate.

Now: We have all the electronics which make contact with each other, locating meetings, etc. so easy.



Bill Wilson, co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, wrote the 12 & 12, How Bill Sees It, and many other works in his studio in an outbuilding on his Katonah, NY home property. While his wife, Lois, referred to the studio as "Wit's End," Bill simply called it the "shack."

Then: Chanting – we didn't.

Now: We chant at the end of the meeting and through various paragraphs in How It Works, e.g., "What's the point?" One person I know recites How It Works from memory, stopping mid sentence at intervals for the rest of the attendees to finish the sentence.

Then: We had AA conference approved literature, the Big Book, 12 and 12, and I don't remember anything else because the information in those books was the subject of most meetings. My home group used a 3 week rotation: step meeting, tradition

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Finds "Joy of Living" Everywhere in A.A.

By Kathi B.

I got sober in New York City on April 24, 1982. I am so grateful to have finally surrendered — I caught the "contagious" disease of sobriety in meetings.

At that time, most of the meetings I attended were located on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. I used to enjoy a Step meeting held at the Jan Hus Church on East 74th Street. It was there, that I met the woman whose story "Fear of Fear" appeared in the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*. She and her husband were regular attendees of that meeting. I was so impressed to have a member in my group who wrote her story in the Big Book. I have since come to understand that we are all just a group of drunks, the same whether we're from "Park Avenue or the park bench." This is an equal opportunity disease.

In 1988, my husband and our 2-year-old daughter and I moved to Los Angeles. At first, the meetings seemed so different from those I was used to. They lasted 90 minutes rather than 60. They celebrated birthdays rather than anniversaries. They would applaud just about anything. And there were many "circuit speakers." Of course, after a

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Gratitude Dinner to Be Held Nov. 15

The Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, 4041 Bahia Vista Ave., will be the site of the Gratitude Dinner on Saturday, Nov. 15. Fellowship at 5:30, Dinner at 6:30 and a dynamic speaker at 8 p.m. Get your tickets early. \$15 covers everything.

“Just Between You and Me”

Recovery Came When He Realized He Needed Others

By Tom T

I was 34 when I first arrived in the rooms on July 7, 1981. My wife, my job pressures, and all those others who “would not leave me alone” were the reasons, not me. I already tried help; psychiatrists with and without drugs, psychologists with EST and QUEST. At best, none could beat the first drink of the day, no matter when, that just made me feel so much better.

My regular alcohol use started as a senior in high school, progressing nicely until my first meeting. I tried other substances that a good A.A. friend labels “liquid, solids, and vapors.” But, alcohol was my choice. I was not a daily drunk but I was always under the influence; thinking of it, drinking it, and recovering from it. Even with college, graduate school, post graduate school, and business success in my life, alcohol became my rapacious predator. Only the final action by a loving wife, Sandra Adelle, threatening divorce and insisting on A.A., not back to the psychiatrist (with drugs, of course), gave me the brief moment of clarity to get to my first meeting.

I sat at the corner of a table with my arms crossed looking at the steps on the wall. All I could think of was that no matter what happened “I was not going to sign nothing.”

Something happened to me that night. I realized that I was NOT crazy. I was not alone in this drinking thing. In the first year, after many meetings, my acceptance of the truth came to me without struggle or regret but, my progress from that point on, was always with great difficulty. Sobriety took hold but the restless, irritable, and discontent factors were always present. My alcoholic, false ego fought everything in the program. How I did not relapse is still a mystery to me. More meetings, two sponsors, the steps, and one more thing helped my acceptance. The meeting when I raised my hand and asked for help with the “VOICES IN MY HEAD,” and when most A.A.’s at that meeting cross-talked directly to answer my fear, was when I knew I was home. Trust in A.A. people in my home group became the final acceptance of my recovery as an A.A. group member and drove home into my psyche the fact that I am not uniquely special and that other people can and will help me.

After five years, a group of seven of us was able to start the first A.A. meeting in Nazareth, PA, my hometown, in 1986. In my fifteenth year I found the Higher Power that I have today. The joy is in the journey. I was blessed to give my Sandra Adelle twenty-five good A.A. years before she died unexpectedly here in Sarasota in 2007. My Gulf Gate Noon group was there to help me through that, as it was there when I remarried in 2011.

After all the years I have learned a few things about me that are a direct result of our total A.A. program. I am now a group think person. I function totally better talking to men about all aspects of my life. I include my sponsees



This Venn diagram allows an individual to show all possible relations between a finite collection of facts, resulting for too many of us in the central overlap designation.

Then and Now

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meeting, discussion meeting. The discussion meeting was almost always about character defects. We all used one “outside” book, the Hazelden *24 Hour Book*. I wore mine out and it was duct taped together and finally trashed before AA’s *Daily Reflections* was published.

Now: We have a greater selection of A.A. conference approved literature and an avalanche of self help books, CDs, etc., published by outside companies, to say nothing of what’s available on the internet.

Then: We went on 12-step calls all the time. Working with newcomers is the richest part of sobriety. We were volunteers in hospitals and institutions.

Now: We rarely have the opportunity to go on a 12-step call. We continue to be volunteers in hospitals and institutions.

in this to help dispel their uniqueness. It was not just alcohol that caused my situations; it was the idea that I could do it all alone by myself. Staying stopped from drinking, better marriage and family, good financial success, and finally some sense of serenity were the results of others with me along for the ride. As I approach my twilight years, I hope to pass on what I have experienced and learned. I am glad for this ride.

First Things First: Morning Prayers

I find that I do best when I remember in my morning prayers to ask my Higher Power to show me the way of patience, kindness, tolerance, and love. This was especially true when I was newly sober and had the emotional maturity of a toddler, thinking the world revolved around me and my wants and needs.

I've also learned that when I'm not practicing PKT&L, I tend to cause harm to people and have to make amends which, in turn, takes me right back to asking God to show me the way. — *Ilene*

One Way to Help Others: Just Listen

Excerpted from Ernest Kurtz's article, Why Haters are Afraid to Listen.

Alcoholics are not the only humans bedeviled by "selfishness — self-centeredness." The diagnosis — the disease — in fact seems fairly widespread. And while most of the rest of us will not "have to go to those stupid meetings," perhaps we can do more than envy those who do. For "Help others" is not a suggestion aimed only at alcoholics.

"What can I do?" For starters, one does not have to go to a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous to listen — by one's attitude and bearing to transmit a willing readiness to hear thoroughly, to attend thoughtfully to another, not waiting for the pause in conversation that will allow one to tell "what happened to me," but truly listening. Perhaps the cruelest words in any conversation are, "That reminds me ..."

If there is one thing that I hope I have learned from my years of study of the story of the program and the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, it is the importance of listening. If there is one thing I would urge on anyone who hopes to be caring and loving and wise, it is to listen.

Listen!

That is why — and how — A.A. works.

Ernest Kurtz is the author of the new book "Experiencing Spirituality," as well as "The Spirituality of Imperfection."



Daily shower reminder is what this member of the fellowship achieved with a unique tattoo.

"Joy of Living"

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while, I came to love the meetings.

Better yet, I learned more about how this fellowship works by doing service as an intergroup rep. One weekend, I accompanied my husband to San Diego for a conference of lawyers in A.A. The main speaker was Dr. Paul, another member whose story appeared in our book. ("Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict.") His message of acceptance coupled with his wonderful sense of humor overwhelmed me. He showed me that when I take myself too seriously, my alcoholic mind can take situations and grow them into problems.

However, when I take the Steps and use my A.A. tools, I get out of the problems and into the solution. Since then I have lived in other places where I have had to adapt myself to different meetings and circumstances. I have gotten better making adjustments, in no small part, because I found the "joy of living" is also contagious. I constantly find it in meetings everywhere I go.

Letter to the Editor

Lauds Central Office "Fulfilling Purpose"

My congratulations to the Central Office board.

We are finally starting to make our Central Office fully self-supporting. Some of our members have been asking for this to be done for years.

This will show our members new and old that we are really fulfilling our primary purpose of carrying A.A.'s message to the alcoholic still suffering.

—*Bill K.*

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STEP 10: "Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it." Why not ".....and when we were wrong promptly apologized." Three key words here for me are "continued," "when," and "admitted". "Continued" connotes ongoing, lasting, enduring. This is not a one time thing. This is how I must behave all the time. "When", not "if". I will be wrong at times in the future. I must be vigilant for those times. "Admitted" is the key element for me. It says to me that I must state my behavior and that it is wrong. For example, "I shouldn't speak to you that way. It is wrong. You don't deserve it. I am sorry." The hardest thing for me to do is "place a period" after stating the behavior. I want to mitigate and excuse as in "but I'm having a bad day." "but you did _____ first", etc. The addition of "but" conveys insincerity, and anything after "but" will diminish all that I've said before. A proper 10th step has to be about sincerity, not expediency. (*Comment by Anonymous.*)

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.

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. Do not send anniversaries for future months: i.e. February anniversaries appear in March.

Bay Group

July	
Hazel O.	33 yrs
Ken D.	28
John W.	25
Kelly P.	24
Leslie R.	21
Alice H.	8
Rick L.	5
August	
Lee I.	41

Bee Ridge East

August	
Mark S.	24
September	
Tom L.	30
Mallory B.	25
Joanne M.	22
Cyndi P.	20

Donut Hour

September	
Maria	8
David I.	4
Rick S.	2
Gail Fisher	1
Jerry M.	1
Jerry McD	1
Tom S.	1

First 100

August	
Wayne Z.	10
Mike P.	9
Alexander N.	5
Bill R.	2
Ami F.	1

Friends of the Pelican

September	
Paul P.	24
Susan B.	11
Tonne Neff.	1
Ray R..	1

From the Heart

September	
Kathy C.	6
Barbara F.	1

Gulf Gate Noon

August	
Arnie	1
Patti H	1
September	
Ben	33
Jody K.	28
Glenn P.	23
Peggy B.	11
Timothy B.	3

Lakewood Ranch 12&12

September	
Ron M.	5
John W.	4
Joe	4
Kristen W.	3

Primary Porpoise

September	
Bob G.	30
Marcia R.	24

Please use the word **ANNIVERSARIES** in the subject line when you email entries for notice here, else they get lost amid the spam & junk

Serenity Room

September	
Teresa C.	11
Wendy M.	7

Sunrise

August	
Trudi V.	1
September	
Marty F.	27
Moirra D.	9
Tom R.	9
Greg G.	1
Greg G.	1
<i>(Coincidentally, two Greg G's with 1 year.)</i>	
Jim P.	1
Rowena.	3
Trey B.	1

Third Legacy Men's

July	
Reid K.	3
September	
Rafael P.	23

Under the Rainbow

September	
Jessie R.	27
Michael McF.	11

Woman Of Hope

September	
Katherine C.	40
Colleen H.	30
Mary C.	15
Joyce C.	12
Kathy C.	6
Beth P.	6
Lynne M.	4
Colleen B.	4
Ann J.	3
Amanda D.	2

Smoking Greater Risk to Recovery

The rates of smoking cigarettes among recovering alcoholics is three times that of the national average and research indicates that alcoholics are at greater risk for the negative health effects of smoking than other smokers, according to Buddy T, writing on *About Health*, an Internet news source.

The site continued: "An estimated 21% of the general population smoke cigarets, but among chemically dependent people, the rate jumps to 80%.

"Research also shows that because of the damage done to the body by years of heavy drinking, recovering alcoholics who smoke are at a much greater risk for developing cancer and cardiovascular disease."

Upcoming Events

GRATITUDE DINNER:

Nov. 15 Menno-nite Church, 4041 Bahia Vista, Sarasota
6:30 Dinner
8:00 Speaker Don P
\$15 covers all

OPEN HOUSE AT CENTRAL OFFICE:

Dec. 6

NEW YEAR'S EVE DANCE:

Faith Presbyterian Church, 1201 N. Beneva Road, Sarasota

Serenity Place Needs Help

Serenity Place at Doctor's Hospital is looking for volunteers to staff meetings on Thursdays and Saturdays at 2:00 at Doctor's Hospital. It is a once a month commitment. For more info, contact Judy M. 921-4564 or 504-7227 or Mallory B. at 941-894-2677

HELPLINE

SEPT. TOTAL CALLS 283

Meeting time/place	207
In lieu of 12 step call	12
Actual 12 step calls	9
Al-Anon Calls	5
Special Needs	1
Miscellaneous	55



Get This Newsletter by Email

Get your Sara-Mana Newsletter emailed to you as a PDF. Email secretary@AAsrq.org and ask to be added to the email list.

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@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.