



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 difference.

OCTOBER 2015

Central Office (941) 351-4818

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

After 35 Years Sober, She Finally Learned How to Live the Steps

By Pamela K.

I grew up in a home with untreated alcoholism. My mother was narcissistic and my father, who fought in the Korean War, was diagnosed schizophrenic. Both were hard workers so there was always food on our table and our material needs were met. I also had a brother, three years younger than me. When I was 11 years old my father committed suicide. My family was devastated. Suffering from depression myself, my search for who I was seemed an impossible task and though I had several role models of good nature in my life, I rejected them all.

At the immature age of 16, I married and had a son. My own alcoholism escalated along with my young husband's. We somehow managed to stay married for eight years, though we separated after only four years. Shortly after the divorce I married a man 24 years my senior. It is no surprise that both marriages were fraught with alcoholism and abuse.

My toxic shame became my whole identity. I considered myself a total failure. I was an underachiever and dependent on the Commonwealth. In July 1976, the Commonwealth

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Gratitude Dinner Nov. 14

Place: Bahia Vista Mennonite Church

4041 Bahia Vista St., Sarasota, FL

Time: 5:30 p.m. Fellowship; 6:30 p.m. Dinner

Speaker : 8 p.m. Jerry E, Naples, FL

Price \$15 which covers food and beverage.

Dinner prepared by Chef Paul.

A limited number of tickets are available. Tickets are in the hands of your Intergroup Representative or at Central Office.

Son's Comment Triggered Her Recovery

By Suzanne H.

I'm feeling very grateful today as I think about the simple statement my son uttered that led to my recovery and a glorious new way of life without alcoholic despair.

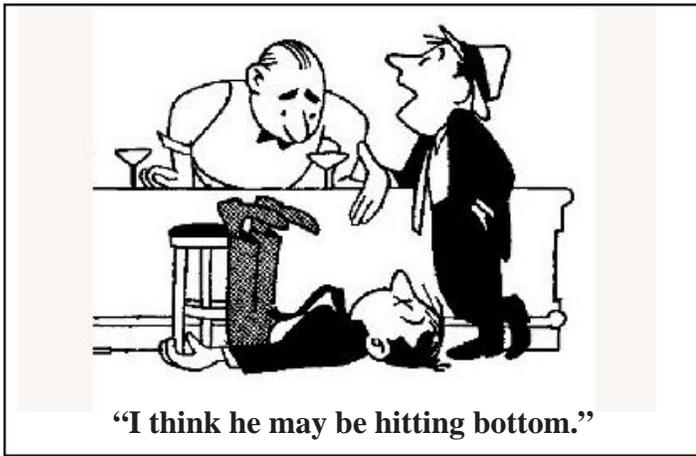
How I got to that moment started long ago, growing up in an alcoholic home. When I look back on how poorly my parents were prepared for life, I am amazed they did as well as they did. There were a lot of fights and tension reigned in our home.

I attended an all-girls school and after high school was finished I knew little at all about life. I met a man—I knew nothing about the opposite sex.

This tortured relationship was the first indication that I was unable to have a healthy relationship with another human being. On top of that, I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. I felt inadequate—a big loser. I chose men who I felt were stronger and better able to cope with life than me, which was just about everybody. I finally ended up with a man who

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"When I was drinking I belonged to both political parties. I ate like an elephant and drank like a jackass. —Anonymous



She Now Lives the Steps

(Continued from Page 1)

determined me to be an incompetent mother and I agreed. They placed my son in a private boarding school. At this point my drinking completely took over my life and for the next 3 months I raced to my bottom.

At the age of 29 I conceded I was alcoholic. I had the next two years to get sober and to become an active member of Alcoholics Anonymous. At this point, my son was returned to me permanently. He was very angry and felt I had abandoned him. We had many hard times together. This difficulty was counterbalanced in the fact that I was sober and had found some serenity within. I had been gainfully employed for 20 years. I had met and married a wonderful man. I had become a good daughter, sister, and wife. I was traveling the Road to Happy Destiny!

My mother died believing that my recovery had taken me away from her. But to the contrary, I was able to be there for her and to hold her as she passed. My son and I continued to struggle. He got married at 18 years of age and there were many times we did not communicate at all. Trying, but failing to cope with these, I became restless, irritable, and discontent. Questioning who I was, I became my own worst enemy. I was full of self-centered fear and began to act out as if I were drinking again. I came close to losing my relationships I so dearly loved!

It was then that God saw fit to bring my current sponsor into my life. She quickly saw my unmanageability and the abusive ways I treated my husband. She took me once again through our 12 steps and encouraged me to treat my loved ones with kindness and love. I was 35 years sober when this sponsor taught me how to live my life through the 12 steps and how a few kind words can transform a relationship. I redid my ninth step amends and learned to forgive. She showed me how to find a Power greater than myself deep down in my soul and that the steps are really character building.

Today I have a God in my life who is with me all the time. Because of this my son and I have a great relationship. I have grandchildren who have never seen me drunk. My husband and I have the best relationship anyone could want. My life is truly second to none.

We will encounter people along the way who try to frustrate our efforts, but the "Eye of God" is always watching over us, empowering and protecting. I am more at peace than I ever dared hope.. I share the principles of the 12 steps with the women I sponsor and I understand them more and more spiritually every time!

Upcoming Events

- *Gratitude Dinner, Saturday Nov. 14*
- *Central Office Open House Dec. 5*
- *New Year's Eve Dance Dec. 31*

Location to be Announced

Son's Comment

(Continued from Page 1)

became my drinking partner for 22 years. I developed a successful career, married, and had children, but I still felt empty, like I had a hole in my soul. Alcohol helped to drown those feelings of emptiness and loneliness.

As the years passed, I relied on alcohol to get me through everything. My drinking got ugly and out of control. I ended up in a locked psychiatric ward, but even that didn't stop my drinking and destructive behavior.

I lived with remorse and despair every day and wished I could end it all. I knew I was ruining my children's lives, and yet I couldn't stop drinking, around the clock by this time.

One day I asked my young son, who seemed sad, what was the matter. He looked me in the eye and said, "You're the matter." It was as if I had been hit by a truck. Because of his simple, truthful statement, I finally saw myself as I really was. I realized that I was responsible for all my actions. I went to the phone and called a treatment center. They took me in the next day.

Then the next miracle happened. I experienced being sober for the first time in more than 20 years. The counselors led us through the 12 steps of the Alcoholics Anonymous program. I began to realize that I could stay sober and I wanted that more than anything in the world. I had no trouble believing that there was a Power greater than myself. And I eagerly listened as the counselors outlined a simple plan for a sober life:

- Don't drink
- Go to meetings
- Join a home group
- Get a sponsor
- and pray. They emphasized the power of prayer,

especially praying by getting down on my knees.

My first year of sobriety was a whirlwind. I went to lots of meetings and my sponsor kept me on the right track. I was happy, joyous, and free and I had hope for the first time in many years – hope that I could lead a new life without remorse and despair as my companions.

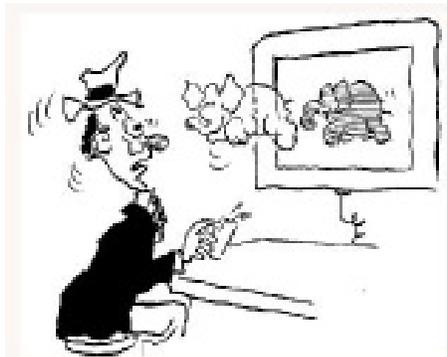
Now, 18 years later, my life is full of miracles. I still go a lot of meetings and have an amazing family and friends in A.A. I still marvel at the fact that I was given a new and wonderful life because I listened to my son.

And I am still grateful every day.

A List of Principles Guiding the 12 Steps

The principles of the Alcoholics Anonymous program are nowhere spelled out. Yet living by those principles is central to achieving and maintaining sobriety. Various lists of principles have been developed over the years, including the following one that suggests principles to match the 12 Steps of the program. The “keys” listed are the central thrust of each step. The list was sent along by long-time member Jaboom:

1. - ACCEPTANCE , HONESTY, SURRENDER
key - Powerlessness
 2. - HOPE
key - Openmindedness
 3. - FAITH
key - Willingness
 4. - COURAGE , ACTION
key - Thoroughness
 5. - INTEGRITY, TRUST
key - Honesty
 6. - WILLINGNESS
key - Readiness
 7. - HUMILITY
key - Change in Attitude, the ability to accept new ideas
 8. - JUSTICE , FORGIVENESS , BROTHERLY LOVE
key - Thoroughness , Acceptance
 9. - SELF DISCIPLINE , GOOD JUDGEMENT
key - Responsibility
 10. - PERSERVERANCE
key - Apply Oneself, maintain Emotional balance
 11. - AWARENESS , CONCIIOUSNESS, PATIENCE
key - Prayer , Meditation , Serenity
 12. - LOVE , SERVICE
key - Kindness , Tolerance , Action
- The practice of all these principles in all of our affairs leads to “GRATITUDE.”



“Wow! I went right past the DT's to the 3D's.”

How She Stays In Touch With A.A.

I owe every MINUTE of my sobriety to my Higher Power, which is A.A.

My faith in the program gets stronger every day. Without my HP to guide me, I would be hopelessly lost and out there drinking again. So, I try to stay close to the program and my sponsor and go to my home group meetings once a week, along with other meetings. Finally, I keep in touch with other alcoholics to keep me connected to my source of strength! —*Miriam R*

No Second Thoughts

“In some circumstances we have gone out deliberately to get drunk, feeling ourselves justified by nervousness, anger, worry, depression, jealousy or the like. But even in this type of beginning we are obliged to admit that our justification for a spree was insanely insufficient in the light of what always happened. We now see that when we began to drink deliberately, instead of casually, there was little serious or effective thought during the period of premeditation of what the terrific consequences might be.”

Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 37

Practice These Principles in ALL our Affairs

The last admonition of the program is “to practice these principles in all our affairs”, Yes, it says “all”....at home, at work, while driving, while playing, etc. “ALL”

In return, I am freed from the demanding tyrant alcohol, and I am freed from the bondage of self. I can be the person that God intended me to be. That's truly an incredible “bargain” for me. It is an unmerited gift for which I shall always be grateful.--*Anonymous*

Dear Alkie

“Alkie” is a long-time member of A.A. His comments are based on his own strength, hope, and experience and do not represent any official A.A. position or practice.

Q. I haven't had a drink in 5 years and accept I'm an alcoholic. I go to several meetings a month and have no desire for booze. I work a job that no longer interests me and my family relations are so-so. Problem is I usually feel “restless, irritable and discontent.” Ideas, please?

A. Give yourself some credit – it's far better to be a functioning “dry drunk” than being a pathetic “wet” one. My belief is the key to a “happy, joyous, and free” sobriety is finding your spirituality and a purpose for your life. The third step prayer says “relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will.” Try living steps 3, 6 & 7 and find a sponsor to help you. In your case, someone who is confident and has an optimistic view of life would be a good fit. Oh, and help someone with something today!

Q. My life is much better since I came to the program 9 months ago. Recently, I've had some drunk dreams that scare me to no end. Am I going crazy or is this normal?

A. Absolutely normal! “Triggers” are unexpected impulses that remind us of our past drinking behavior when we had enjoyable feelings. They may be brought on by a place, experience, or even a scene from a show. The craving can be very intense but can be managed. If you resist the impulse for 60 seconds, the craving fades. “Move a muscle/change a thought” and “think through the drink” are both still good advice.

Q. I think I'm starting to get this. The tenth step makes sense to me now. Any suggestions?

A. Many folks offer quick apologies for minor infractions they make in everyday life. Remember to quietly examine your behavior and feelings for healthy or disruptive thoughts and actions every day until daily inventory becomes a habit.

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. February anniversaries appear in March.

Early Big Book

July		Jim L.	2
Harry R.	24	Rachel H.	1
Mary Ann	3	Debbie S.	1
Ray S.	1	August	
Matt S.	1	Debbie L.	2
		Arnie J.	2

August

Dwight B.	41	September:	
Joyce C.	17	Jody	30
Laureen	4	Timothy D.	3

September

Karl K.	3	Happy Cookie Hour	
Lisa W.	1	June	
Stacey A.	1	JD V.	25
September		Tom M.	7
Joe M.	5	Corinna	1
Jude B.	6	July	

Early Bird

August		Rob Mc.	13
Jim N.	3	Troy S.	5
		Bill W.	1

Friends of the Pelican

August		August	
Frank G.	32	Parris S.	28
Joe R.	15	Dolores	26
Peggy P.	7	Molly	15
Amy E.	2	Lisa F.	14
Gayle H.	2	John H.	5
September		Jay W.	3
Paul P.	25	Karla	3
Susan B.	12	Debbie `	2
Ray R.	2	Kristen B.	2

Gulf Gate Noon

July		Monday Nite Mens	
Tom T.	35	August	
Joan H.	26	Bill W.	23
Lyn M.	25	Pass It On	
Mare D.	17	September	
Jan Y.	15	Paul P.	25
Jim B.	15		
Terry D.	5		

The 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.



St. Armand's Noon

September	
Ruth G.	34
Paul W.	21
Tracey D.	21
Terry C.	20
Sharon K.	17
David D.	13

Serenity Group

August	
Kathy G.	37
Debi R.	17
Ted S.	9
Jim M.	8
Phil H.	3
September	
Dave O.	33
Janet T.	25
Richard G.	14
Teresa C.	12
Wendy M.	8
Laura L.	1

Sunrise

July	
Suzie W.	15
Ray L.	14
Micheal T.	11
Larry W.	10
Joe F.	5
Keith V.	3
September	
Greg G.	2
Jim P.	2
Patrick H	1

The Two-Question Quiz

Eppie Lederer, better known as Ann Landers, asked a friend to take her to an A.A. meeting, out of curiosity. Her limousine drove them to a meeting in the basement of an Old Town (Chicago) church. It was a closed meeting. When her host asked the group if he could bring Ann Landers in, he was voted down. When told of the rejection, Eppie said, "Well I've heard everything! Ann Landers can't get into an A.A. meeting!" He knew about an open meeting at the nearby church, and took her there.

Eppie asked, "What do you think about my columns where I print the 20-question quiz to see if you have a drinking problem?" He said her quiz was excellent, but didn't tell her that at a meeting he heard a two-parter: *If you drink when you didn't intend to, and more than you intended to, you, my friend, have just failed this test.*

"Friends" Time Changes

Starting Nov. 1, 2015 the **Friends of the Pelican group of Alcoholics Anonymous** will change our meeting time from starting at 8 p.m. to starting at 7:30 p.m. for both the Monday "As Bill Sees It" meeting and the Thursday "Big Book Study."

Help at Serenity Place

Two A.A. meetings a week are taken into Serenity Place at Doctors Hospital, a 16-bed behavioral health unit which recognizes that alcoholism/substance abuse are often associated issues.

The meetings take place at 2:00 p.m. on Thursdays and Saturdays and last 1 hour. We would like to increase our substitute volunteer list and are looking for men and women who would be available on those afternoons. The suggested requirement is a minimum of 1 year sobriety and a willingness to carry the message. If you are interested, please contact either Mallory B at 941-894-2677 malloryblank@gmail.com or Dianne B 941-331-4312 dibu5234@icloud.com. We get to keep what we have by giving it away!