



On the web at aasrq.org

Sara-Mana Intergroup

POBox 3075 1748 Independence Blvd. #B2 Sarasota, FL 34234

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 2016

Central Office (941) 351-4818

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

The Magic Circle Ride Don't Let Perfect Be Enemy of Good

By: William G.

"Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good" my father used to say. Regrettably I for too long neglected to apply his sage advice to doing a 4th step.

Looking back I can understand how I convinced myself I ought to thoroughly nail steps 1,2 and 3 before attempting a 4th step - Being mistakenly told that inventory was something I should not attempt in early sobriety sure didn't help!

While it's true that the Steps are "in order for a reason" and have a linear, progressive logic, it's also true that one step can serve to illuminate another. This was particularly true for me as sharing with another my closely held secrets in Step 5, allowed me to see, with the filter of shame largely removed, just how powerless, unmanageable and truly insane I had been.

Then, having also admitted to God and suffering no fire-and-brimstone retribution, I was able to, with a renewed sense of trust in a non-judgmental, non-punishing God, begin to more earnestly turn my life and will over to his care.

The important thing is not to do the steps perfectly but simply to do them because as we work our way through the 12th and have a "Spiritual Awakening as THE result of these steps", something quite astounding happens: The straight line of the 12 Steps magically turns into a circle and loops us right back to the beginning where we can now revisit the Steps again and again, with the depth of understanding that our inventorying, sharing and subsequent spiritual awakening provides.



Gratitude Dinner Nov. 12; Get Tickets Early

Intergroup announced that its annual Gratitude Dinner, the second major gathering of the year for Sara-Mana District 4, will be held on Saturday, Nov. 12.

Location is the now familiar Mennonite Church on Bahia Vista where other recent A.A. dinners including the June Founders Day dinner have been held.

Fellowship begins at 5:30, a buffet dinner will be served at 6:30, and a featured speaker will cap off the evening at 8:30. The \$15-per-ticket charge covers the meal, a choice of BBQ chicken or pulled pork, with all the fixings.

The hall holds almost 400 diners and has been sold out at events, so get your tickets early, either from your Intergroup rep or at Central Office.

How Jail Pod Program Starts Pair in Recovery

By Josh H. and Steven B.

When we entered into the recovery pod at the Sarasota County Jail, we had no idea what to expect. Finding hope amidst suffering seemed impossible in jail, but we made a choice not to throw away the opportunity to change our lives.

Through the help of the twelve step programs of both A.A. and N.A., along with the resources of the Salvation Army, speakers, and the guidance of the pod deputies, we were set on the path to recovery.

The pod offers us a rehabilitation

(Continued on Page 2)

Insane? I once drove 40 miles to buy a corkscrew. —Yvonne

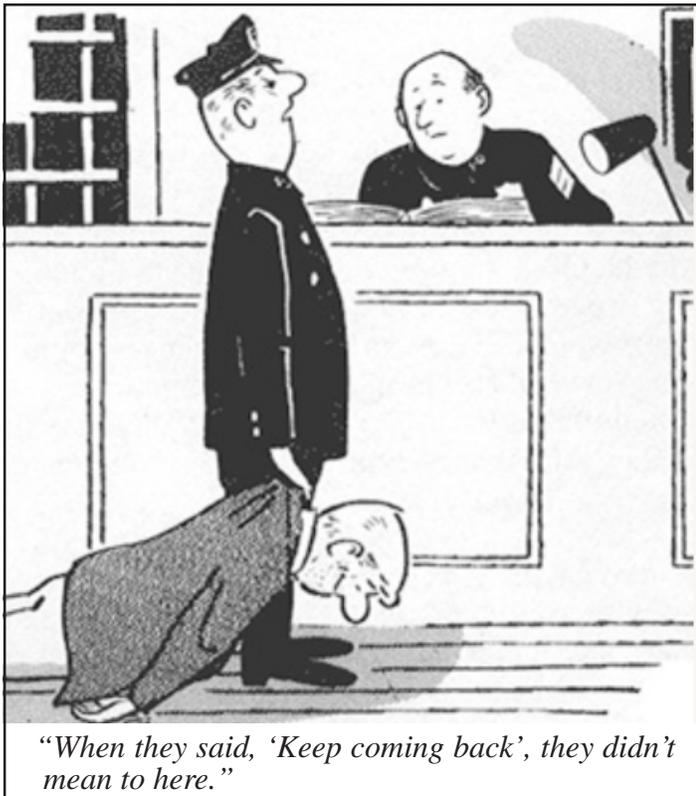
Central Office Hours Back to Normal

Central Office returned to normal hours (5 days a week, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.) Oct. 1, ending its summer schedule. Central Office is also open various evenings and Saturdays for committee and group meetings.

Get Newsletter by Email

Get your Sara-Mana Newsletter emailed to you as a PDF. Email edgarc@aol.com and ask to be added to the email distribution list.

The benefits include not being shut out if your meeting's supply is exhausted early, getting the issues as much as a week before they are available in print form, and saving the organization printing costs.



Nancy's Notes

Shed "Bondage of Self"

Nancy B. keeps a daily journal, and enters thoughts about the A.A. program triggered by her morning readings. She shares those musings with us.

To me the "bondage of self" I read about in A.A. literature turns out to be self-centered thinking and actions based in fear: fear of not being liked; fear of criticism; fear of being attacked both emotionally and physically; fear of surprises; fear of failure; fear of embarrassment; fear of humiliation; fear of not having enough money (or enough of anything else); fear of not fitting in—in other words, how most of us alcoholics are in fear.

Ironically, my alcoholism brought many of those fears into reality to some extent. Sobriety and my A.A. program opened my eyes to my self-centeredness, made me feel accepted and safe, and continues to teach me how to be conscious in my life so that I can make choices to do the right thing and to make amends when I mess up.

Plan Ahead, Way Ahead

The 85th Anniversary of the founding Alcoholics Anonymous will be held July 2-5, 2020 in Detroit, MI. Registration and hotel contacts will not be available until 2019. You can stay abreast of developments by checking the national web site at www.aa.org or the national newsletter, Box 459, which you can order from GSO on aa.org, or by picking up a copy at Central Office.

Fair: Opportunity for Service



Bright and airy conference room in Central Office is home to meetings of all General Service and Intergroup committees.

On Sept. 17, a very successful service fair was held through the efforts of our Chair of District 4 and all the Committee members of service. The turnout was impressive and resulted in much interest and participation. To see so many people present who are not currently involved in the Service Structure of General Service present resulted in much gratitude. Again thanks to all who attended and made the day such a success.

As a reminder, there are more events coming up before the year end. The Central Office Open House will be held on Dec. 1. I know it will be as well attended as it has been in the past. It may be early but don't forget the New Year's Eve event to celebrate another year of fellowship and recovery.

A.A. is the only organization where you can come in as a big shot and work your way up to servant. Carol K.

Pair Comments on A.A. in Jail

(Continued from Page 1)

with four meetings a day dealing with alcoholism, drugs, anger management, and other underlying issues which were part of the process of healing. If we hadn't made the decision to surrender our addiction to this program it would have led us to nothing more than repeated failure (Jails, Institutions, and Death). Our daily schedule in the Recovery Pod was: A.A. meeting at 7:30 a.m. followed by Salvation Army meetings at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., and another A.A. meeting at 7:30 p.m. At first it seemed overwhelming, but through these meetings we gained a better understanding of our addiction.

For the first time in our addiction we felt a freedom due to our willingness to change our lives through the guidance of this program. We are grateful for the speakers that came in and shared their experience, hope, and strength. They believed in us and showed us a way out of our addiction. Through the tools of the program which included literature and positive reinforcement by the deputies, we were put on a path that would forever change our lives.

Our addiction brought us to the lowest point in our lives, landing us in jail, but we didn't have to dwell on the past. We became open minded, and looked at the Pod as a rehab; as inmates we created an atmosphere of addicts helping addicts. Through all of the offerings of the Recovery Pod programs we are able to make the necessary life changes, so that we can live a normal substance free life

Today we are able to carry the message of our experience, hope, and strength to others who are suffering from the disease of addiction. Our hope is that they too may find light in the darkness, rise above addiction, and then help others.

What Sponsors Are NOT, and Their Real Role

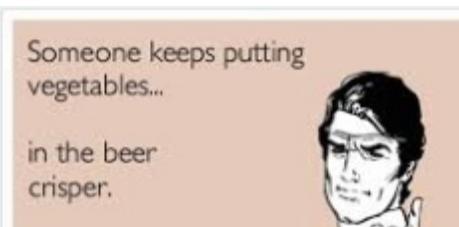
An A.A. sponsor is not a professional caseworker or counselor of any sort. A sponsor is not someone to borrow money from, nor get clothes, jobs, or food from. A sponsor is not a medical expert, nor qualified to give religious, legal, domestic or psychiatric advice, although a good sponsor is usually willing to discuss such matters confidentially, and often can suggest where the appropriate professional assistance can be obtained.

A sponsor is a sober alcoholic who can help solve only one problem: how to stay sober. And the sponsor has only one tool to use - personal experience, not scientific wisdom.

Sponsors have been there, and often have more concern, hope, compassion, and confidence for us than we have for ourselves. They certainly have had more experience. Remembering their own condition, they reach out to help, not down.

Living Sober page 27

(Submitted by Chris C.)



Prayer for Step 10

Various web sites offer prayers to accompany the working of each step in our program. These are not part of the official canon of A.A. but are grounded in Big Book comments and are well-regarded by many long-time A.A. members. Here is one for Step 10:

God, remove the selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear that has cropped up in my life right now. Help me to discuss this with someone immediately and make amends quickly if I have harmed anyone. Help me to cease fighting anything and anyone. Show me where I may be helpful to someone else. Help me react sanely, not cocky or afraid. How can I best serve You? - Your will, not mine be done. AMEN
(Based on pages 84 & 85 Big Book)



The Whole Program, On a Business Card

After a particularly meaningful share which might have been titled "Avoiding the Pour Me's," Harry was asked to write up his thoughts for an article for this newsletter, and given a business card with the editor's email address.

A few days later, Harry returned the card. In neatly block-printed pencil, Harry had written:

"I go to meetings and talk to my sponsor if necessary. I suffer from depression which I take medication for. And I don't drink under any and all conditions."

That said it all.

How to Check Quality of 9th Step Amends

Lisa B. Marshall, West Coast professional consultant, suggested steps to a better apology. It struck us that the same steps could be useful in reviewing the quality of your amends called for in Step 9 of the A.A. program. Here's what Marshall suggested:

1. Express regret. List the hurtful effects of what you did.

2. Accept responsibility. Take ownership of the fault of the specific mistake.

3. Make restitution. Ask the person you wronged how you can make amends.

4. Repent. Say that you will work to resolve the issue or change your behavior and will not let the problem recur.

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 love A.A. but I struggle with the "God thing." I'm not religious and the concept of "spirituality" is confusing to me. Explain, please.

A. This has been a "hot topic" since the early days of the program. Think of it this way: The Gift Of Desperation brought us into the program; a Group Of Drunks give us the sustenance of the fellowship; Good Orderly Direction gave us the guidance of a sponsor; and Grace Over Drama is the reward of sobriety. There is an old adage that if you're looking for your Higher Power, start by remembering it's not you.

Q. I've been around for a while and heard about the "ah-ha" moment. I've never had a "bolt out of the blue" experience but I'm committed to the program and sober. Am I missing something?

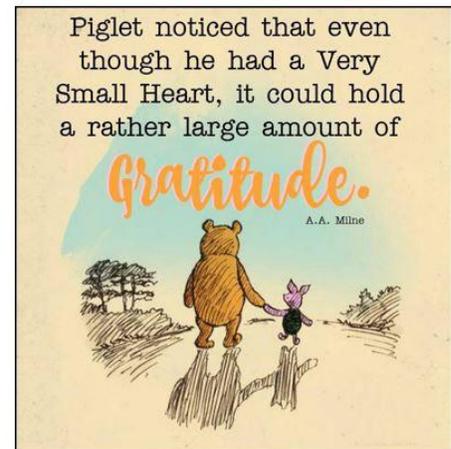
A. In my opinion, when you finally overcome the denial of your disease and know you need help (complete, wholehearted acceptance of the first three steps), is when you start making real progress. One test of having reached that point; When your fear of the known (horrors of drunkenness) is greater than your fear of the unknown (self-centered anxiety & fear).

Q. I've done my first round of amends and things went fairly well. Now on to the tenth step, which seems like common sense. Any advice?

A. To most folks, this step is making quick apologies for missteps of everyday life. One way of avoiding missteps (and the need for apologies), is to practice "restraint of pen & tongue." More important is to concentrate on the first part of this step "continued to take personal inventory." The steps are not a project like earning a merit badge; they're the principles on how to live our lives.

Anniversaries

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <u>63rd Avenue</u> | <u>Happy Cookie Hour</u> | <u>St Armand's Noon</u> |
| September | July | September |
| Leslie W. 32 | John W. 26 | Sue. 37 |
| Marta B. 19 | Rob Mc. 14 | Ruth G. 33 |
| Steve H. 13 | Troy S. 6 | Carolyn. 30 |
| Tom W. 8 | Tommy 4 | Paul W. 22 |
| | Michele S. 2 | Tracey D. 22 |
| | Irene 1 | Terry C. 21 |
| <u>Beneva Discussion</u> | August | Sharon K. 16 |
| September | Parris 29 | David D. 14 |
| Dean R. 10 | Dolores 27 | Stacy H. 7 |
| | Marilyn R. 21 | Maggie 2 |
| | Molly 16 | |
| <u>Donut Hour</u> | Lisa F. 15 | |
| July | Jay W. 4 | Sunrise |
| Ed K. 40 | Jim N. 4 | September |
| Linda B. 30 | Kristen B. 3 | Moira D. 11 |
| George S. 28 | Maggie 2 | Greg G. 3 |
| August | Chance 1 | |
| Kathy A. 6 | | |
| September | | Women's Wednesday |
| Jean W. 27 | | A.M. (Holmes Beach) |
| Maria T. 10 | <u>Oasis</u> | September |
| Cori 1 | September | Lynne M. 29 |
| | Janet F. 9 | Penny M. 24 |
| | | Anne L. 7 |
| <u>Early Big Book</u> | | |
| July | | *GROUPS: |
| Harry R. 25 | <u>Pass-it-On</u> | <i>Groups: email</i> |
| Lissette R. 1 | September | <i>birthdays to</i> |
| August | Paul P. 26 | <i>newsletter@AAsrq.org</i> |
| Dwight B. 42 | Frank B. 6 | <i>and put</i> |
| Joyce C. 18 | | ANNIVERSARIES in the |
| Stacy A. 3 | | subject line. Cutoff for |
| September | | the newsletter |
| Jude B. 7 | | is the last day of the |
| | <u>Serenity Room</u> | month. October |
| | September | anniversaries appear in |
| | Dave 34 | November issue. |
| <u>Friends of the Pelican</u> | Janet T. 26 | |
| September | Wendy M. 9 | |
| Paul P. 26 | Rob S. 3 | |
| | Laura 2 | |



Sure Bet Turns 20!



The Sure Bet Group (Gamble Mansion State Park, Ellenton), is having a picnic on November 20, 2016, immediately following the regular Sunday 1 - 2 pm meeting. It's the group's 20th anniversary so it'll be special!

Stay tuned for more details!

Celebrating Nine Years of Recovery

Join Keep it Simple on Nov. 1, and bring a covered dish, as they celebrate their anniversary. Dinner starts at 6, speakers begin at 7.

Where?

Saints Peter and Paul the Apostles Catholic Church, 2850 75th Street West, Bradenton, FL 34209



Calling All Readers!

Share your Experience, Strength and Hope with our Fellowship on Steps 1, 2, and 3!

We are looking for readers to submit their short personal stories.

We want to hear from you!

Email: newsletter@aasrq.org

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.