



# Sara-Mana Intergroup

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

On the web at [aasrq.org](http://aasrq.org)



December 2013 Central Office (941-351-4818) Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

## You can be sober and joyous, as well

Holiday parties without liquid spirits may still seem a dreary prospect to new A.A.s. But many of us have enjoyed the happiest holidays of our lives sober—an idea we would never have dreamed of, wanted or believed possible when drinking.

Here are some tips for having an all-round ball without a drop of alcohol.

- ◆ Line up extra A.A. activities for the holiday season.
- ◆ Be host to A.A. friends, especially newcomers.
- ◆ Keep your A.A. telephone list with you all the time.
- ◆ Find out about the special holiday parties, meetings, or other celebrations given by groups in the area, and go.
- ◆ Skip any drinking occasion you are nervous about.
- ◆ If you have to go to a drinking party and can't take an A.A. with you, keep some candy handy.
- ◆ Don't think you have to stay late at a party.
- ◆ Worship in your own way.
- ◆ Don't sit around brooding.
- ◆ Don't start now getting worked up about all those holiday temptations.
- ◆ Enjoy the true beauty of holiday love and joy.
- ◆ "Having had a..." No need to spell out the Twelfth Step here, since you already know it.

Look over this list several times. Remember how wonderful it is to be sober, and how much better you will feel tomorrow not having anything to drink the night before.

But if you do get in a pinch and are about to slip, call the Sara-Mana Helpline at 941-951-6810.

## 2014 fund drive to support Central Office set for January 1-April 16

The Sara-Mana Central Office, oftentimes termed the "heartbeat of the A.A. community," will kick off its 2014 fund drive on January 1.

The office was established in 1986 to carry the A.A. message to

suffering alcoholics and to provide information about A.A. to the community.

The fund campaign, which hopes to raise \$28,000 during the three and one-half month period, is to support the many programs and assistance provided to A.A.s and the community, a sampling of which follows:

- ◆ During the past 12 months, 3,555 inquiries were directed to the Central Office Helpline, which answers calls regarding A.A., handles 12-step calls, provides referrals to Al-Anon and other actions.
- ◆ A.A. literature, such as Big Books, Twelve Step books, pamphlets, as well as materials (including medallions for groups) are supplied.
- ◆ The Central Office is made available to the many Intergroup, General Service and other A.A. committees, providing and maintaining a place for A.A. meetings, service organizations and committees to meet, in addition to hosting group meetings.
- ◆ An informational web site is maintained providing A.A. information and materials to members and potential members.

Please make a generous gift to support this important campaign. Individual contributions account for 46% of Central Office revenues, with 31% coming from group contributions and 23% from sales of books and other items. And, contributions are tax deductible.

Envelopes are available at meetings and the Central Office. If your meeting place doesn't have envelopes, ask your Intergroup rep to get a supply.



**A very merry, sober Christmas one and all**

### A GRAPEVINE Quote of the Day

"My past sobriety is not a ticket to future sobriety. I have to pay that fare and make the decision to recover daily."

## These two women sat at the bar

Two women sat at a bar. One looks at the other and says, "You sound like you're from Ireland."

The other woman responds proudly, "Yes, I sure am."

The first one says, "So am I, and where about in Ireland are ya from?"

The other woman answers, "I'm from Dublin, I am."

The first one says, "So, am I!! What street did you live on?"

The other woman says, "I lived on Warbury Street in the old central part of town."

The first one says, "Faith and begorra. So did I! So did I! And what school did ya go to?"

The other woman answers, "Well now, I went to Holy Heart of Mary, of course."

The first one gets really excited and says, "And so did I! Tell me, what year did you graduate?"

The other woman answers, "Well, now, let's see. I graduated in 1964."

The first woman exclaims, "The Good Lord must be smiling down upon us! I can hardly believe our good luck at winding up in the same pub tonight! Can you believe it? I graduated from Holy Heart of Mary in 1964 me self!"

About this time, Michael walks into the bar, sits down, and orders a beer.

Brian, the bartender, walks over to Michael, shaking his head and mutters, "It's going to be a long night tonight."

Michael asks, "Why do you say that, Brian?"

Brian answers, "The Murphy twins are drunk again."

Get your Sara-Mana Newsletter emailed to you in a PDF format each month. Email [secretary@asrq.org](mailto:secretary@asrq.org) and ask to be on the list.

## YOU need to know this

**HAPPY COOKIE HOUR**, which had planned a move, temporarily CONTINUES TO MEET Monday through Friday at 5:30 p.m. at the Disabled American Veterans facility, 2445 Fruitville Road, Sarasota.

**THIRD LEGACY MEN'S GROUP** at 7 p.m. on Tuesday has MOVED to Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, 7461 Prospect Road, Sarasota.

**PARRISH 11<sup>th</sup> 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.

**SUNRISE GROUP** has MOVED and now meets at 7 a.m. at Bahia Vista Menonite Church, 4041 Bahia Vista in Sarasota. Monday thru Saturday meetings are in Room 11 on west side of the building. Sunday meetings are in the rear pavilion.

**BRADENTON YOUNG PEOPLE**, a NEW group, meets Mondays at 8 p.m. in the Gratitude Room, 1819 5th Street.

**HUMBLE BEGINNINGS** Big Book Meeting NOW MEETS at 7 p.m. on Fridays at Church of the Cross, 3005 South Tuttle, Sarasota.

**NO RAINY DAYS**, an open discussion meeting, NOW MEETS at 12:10 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at Longwood Park outdoor pavilion by the basketball court at 6050 Longwood Run Blvd., Sarasota.

For up-to-date changes please check the website [Where & When at asrq.org](http://Where & When at asrq.org). Click on the meeting tab at the top of the page.



## 3 for December

### Step 12

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

### Tradition 12

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

### Concept 12

The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it

never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government; that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

## Pass it on – three great words

When I first got to A.A. over 20 years ago, I was uncertain I was a real alcoholic. I was confused and full of questions. The denial of my disease was constantly pointing to some argument that made my case different.

Many members of A.A. would talk with me after meetings to help me get some clarity and to answer questions. This baffled me. My use and abuse of alcohol had taken me to such a cesspool of self-centeredness that people giving of themselves, expecting nothing in return, was beyond comprehension. I was waiting for you to give me a tambourine and send me to the airport.

After one meeting, Charlie, a gentleman I'd never seen before, stayed and patiently answered every question. He gently debunked my arguments for my uniqueness. Our discussion lasted for an hour or more. The parking lot had long since emptied out. Were it not for a lone overhead light, we would've been standing in the dark. We exchanged phone numbers. I'm not sure that I even thanked him.

As incredibly helpful and illuminating as that discussion was, I still didn't understand "A.A. giving." Driving home I was certain he would contact me the next day to try and sell me Amway or Tupperware, or involve me in some shady real estate deal. Needless to say, he never called with any "deal." What a scathing indictment of how corroded I had become by my alcoholism. I can't ever forget that alcohol can make me not even recognize charity, let alone practice it!

A week or so later I saw him at a meeting. After the meeting, I approached him and told him how much our talk had helped me. When I thanked him for the time he spent with me, he replied with "You can thank me by doing the same for another newcomer someday."

For the last 22 years I've tried to do exactly that. I think I have spent almost as much time standing in parking lots with newcomers after meetings as I have spent sitting in

## Gratitude Dinner scores a success

A capacity crowd attended the Nov. 15 Gratitude Dinner.

It was the first held at the Bahia Vista Mennonite Church in Sarasota. Attendees lauded the main speaker for the event, Karen R., whose *Crossing the River of Denial* is in the Big Book.

Doug R., chairman of the dinner, said the venue was great, the meal prepared by Chef Paul outstanding, and lauded A.A.s who helped on the event. Included were Intergroup, led by Dana H.; Tom M. and the Events committee; Pat K. for decorations; Tony F. and the Central Office, as well as FCYPAA for serving.

## New format for New Year's Eve

Two speakers, dinner by Chef Paul and an entry in a drawing for a 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Limited Edition of the Big Book are yours at the a New Year's Eve dinner this year.

Mitzi P. and Eric M. will be the speakers. Dinner will feature a salad, chicken, pasta and a desert.

Festivities start with a fellowship hour at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 6:30 and the speakers at 8. The event will be held at Faith Presbyterian Church at 1201 N. Beneva in Sarasota.

"We are focusing on a new event for this New Year's Eve," said Tom M. events chairman. "Past gatherings have included a dance; however, most attendees had departed by the time dancing started, so we decided to give A.A.s what they wanted: fellowship, a great meal and speakers."

Tickets for \$8 are available by calling the Central Office at 351-4818, and will be available at the door. Tickets are not required for the speaker meeting.

meetings. I've done that because Charlie and others by their actions taught me A.A.'s primary purpose. After all, the book of A.A.'s beginnings is aptly titled "Pass It On".

*By Tom S.*

## Dear Alkie

**Dear Alkie:** I've got lots of problems and things bothering me, should I talk to God about them?

Alkie: If I get tired of hearing from friends who only call to whine, imagine how God feels!

**Dear Alkie:** I don't know how to pray, but I'm sure I need help. Any suggestions?

Alkie: "Help" is a prayer!

**Dear Alkie:** What is spirituality?

Alkie: Spirituality is the compass that gives my life direction.

**Dear Alkie:** Even though I'm sober and going through the Steps, I don't think I can be of help to anyone. Any thoughts?

Alkie: God doesn't care about our ability or inability, only our availability to help others.

**Dear Alkie:** I was sponsoring a guy but he got drunk. I feel horrible!

Alkie: We only carry the message; God sees to its delivery.

**Dear Alkie:** Do you folks in AA really help others who want to get sober for free?

Alkie: From what we get we make a living. From what we give we make a life. The highest reward for a person's toil is not what they get for it, but what they become by it.

**Dear Alkie:** I'm in a "special" relationship that requires me to be less than honest. Aren't there some relationships that are beyond the scope of the 12th Step?

Alkie: If you can't practice the principles in all your affairs, you're probably having one.

**Dear Alkie:** I get all the material things I see advertised, but I'm still not happy. What is going on?

Alkie: Success is getting what you want; happiness is wanting what you get. The secret to a happy life isn't succeeding in getting what we want; it is enjoying it once we have it.

# ANNIVERSARIES

Groups: email birthdays to newsletter@asrq.org and put ANNI-VERSARIES in the subject line. Cutoff for the newsletter is the last day of the month. Do not send anniversaries for future months: i.e. November anniversaries appear in December.

## 63RD AVENUE

### October

Sandi D. 10 years  
Chuck 2 years

### November

Benjamin B. 29 years  
Artur Z. 1 year

## ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

### November

Gordon B. 47 years  
Walt M. 25 years  
Ali D. 23 years  
Denise K. 21 years  
Joan P. 17 years  
Susan S. 17 years  
Dana D. 5 years  
Bob B. 1 year

## BEE RIDGE EAST

### November

Mary M. 26 years  
Walt M. 25 years

## DONUT HOUR

### November

Kathy F. 27 years  
Michael R. 24 years  
John C. 21 years  
John S. 11 years  
Betty T. 8 years  
Darin A. 4 years  
John R. 4 years  
Eric N. 3 years  
Leslye D. 3 years  
Michel M. 3 years  
Michel 2 years  
Nani 2 years  
Al P. 1 year  
Bill S. 1 year  
Mike M. 1 year

## EARLY BIG BOOK

### November

Patty D. 42 years  
Anne M. 12 years  
Kim C. 8 years  
Carl P. 8 years  
Holly 2 years  
Katherine H. 1 year

## EARLY BIRD

### November

Homer H. 23 years

## FROM THE HEART

### November

Joan P. 37 years

## HAPPY COOKIE HOUR

### October

Ron E. 33 years  
George L. 31 years  
Jerry C. 19 years  
Maryann G. 12 years  
Sharon E. 11 years

Trudy 10 years

Joe B. 2 years

Linda M. 1 year

Nicky 1 year

### November

Jimmy J. 29 years  
Susan O. 11 years  
Laurie P. 7 years  
Charlie 1 year

## MONDAY NIGHT MEN'S

### October

Harry G. 21 years

## OAK STREET

### October

Lucia T. 57 years  
Welton K. 38 years  
Pamela K. 37 years  
Peter B. 35 years  
Nancy W. 22 years  
Susan W. 22 years  
Barbara D. 21 years  
Howard C. 21 years  
Sharon E. 11 years  
Wanda L. 11 years  
Susan S. 9 years  
Corey M. 6 years  
Mark D. 5 years  
Christine S. 4 years

### November

Patty DiM. 42 years  
Jim G. 34 years  
Sue S. 34 years  
Cynthia L. 24 years  
Howard K. 21 years  
Nadine S. 8 years  
Philip W. 7 years  
Marita R. 4 years  
Shelly L. 4 years

## ST. ARMAND'S

### November

George M. 39 years  
Mary Jane L. 38 years  
Jerry W. 26 years  
Kathy B. 25 years  
Heather A. 6 years  
Nani M. 2 years

# My Sobriety

I happen just to walk in from detox  
I did come determined to change my life  
I said the alcohol and drugs are done  
For many days within my mind  
A craving came up on me  
And during my temptation  
I listened to all around me  
People there they spoke of steps  
Numbered one to twelve  
They spoke of their experiences  
And made me think as well  
I lived that life they spoke about  
I've been there to the same  
I thought at once they're just like me  
I don't need to be ashamed  
I listened more and more each day  
And time and time went by  
The craving slowly went away  
And then I realized  
To talk about my problems  
Made me feel relieved  
I learned the steps from one to twelve  
And gained my self esteem  
I even started to love myself  
Not dwelling about my past  
I learned to like sobriety  
It's a life I never had

*By Fidel A.*

## SATURDAY NIGHT SPEAKERS

### October

Mike S. 15 years  
Debbie C. 4 years

## SERENITY

### November

Frank A. 33 years  
Terry 25 years  
Carol B. 1 year  
Saundra W. 1 year

## SINGLENESSE OF PURPOSE

### November

Roger H. 25 years

## SUNRISE

### November

Gordon B. 47 years  
Bob R. 6 years  
Rich C. 3 years

## UNDER THE RAINBOW

### November

Cheri L. 7 years  
Dee S. 3 years  
Shaun S. 1 year

## HELPLINE TOTALS

November 2013

Call count.....240

### BREAKDOWN:

Meeting time/location..142

In lieu of 12 step call.....9

Actual 12 step calls.....5

Al-Anon referrals.....15

Special Needs.....0

Miscellaneous.....69

Spanish Helpline.....2

Please HELP "Carry the Message." Your Helpline currently has only a few shifts open. If you're willing to assist in our most basic and fundamental of services, please call Central Office at (941) 351-4818.

The main purpose of this newsletter is to inform, connect and entertain. TO SUBMIT ITEMS TO THE NEWSLETTER: Send 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.