



# Sara-Mana Intergroup

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



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

## Are we powerless?

The first step in recovery is to fully concede we are alcoholics. Sounds simple, but when new, I just wanted to know how to handle my drinking, to get that good feeling again. It just wasn't there anymore. I can handle my liquor. I won't overdo it tonight. I probably wasn't as bad as I remember. These thoughts ran through my head.

I was told to identify! Here is what I identify with: The thought crossed my mind that if I put an ounce of whiskey in my milk, it couldn't hurt me on a full stomach. What happens next? Same old story. My body takes over. I cannot manage or control the number of drinks I take, once I start drinking again. Stopping isn't the problem for an alcoholic like me. Staying stopped is the part I can't get.

It's the mental obsession, the physical compulsion. My real problem starts with selfishness and self-centeredness. The solution was the destruction of self-centeredness. Drinking was only a symptom of the underlying problem. It meant the destruction of self-centeredness. So that meant this must be a program of selflessness. This doesn't mean I think any less of myself, I just think of myself less. Carrying the message and helping others is where I find peace, serenity and a usefulness.

I'm not powerless today. I've been given the power to help others. I've learned as it says in the book "that, in God's hands, the dark past is the greatest possession you have—the key to life and happiness for others. With it you can avert death and misery for them." A Loving God can use a sot like me to help others.

Jim C.

## Central Office fund drive off to slow start, needs our financial support

The Sara-Mana Central Office annual fund drive is off to a slow start, according to volunteers heading the effort.

We have the best Central Office in Florida and possibly the country, and this is largely a result of Sara-Mana A.A.ers .

## Why this A.A.er stays in service

by Patty F.

We all have our A.A. story, but if we find our way to service, we will have a service story. In early recovery, I was encouraged to do 12 step work, as well.

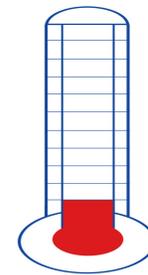
Following recovery from a traumatic brain injury I found my way to the Special Needs Committee, where my experience, strength and hope found a home. Later I was area chair of this committee. My service work and story took on new meaning and purpose.

Since arriving in Sarasota I've been involved as a GSR and a committee chair. Nothing made me feel more at home here than this. I rotated out as chair and wondered what would I do next in service. I didn't have to wonder too long, because a need appeared and I offered to help. I'm now facilitating quarterly meetings of GSRs to provide them information for a successful service experience.

And, what a wonderful experience, welcoming and supporting our GSRs as they begin their journey into service at the district level. As Bill W. has noted "the GSR has the job of linking his or her group to

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Funds from literature sales are only a small portion of the money required to maintain the office as we know it. Some funds come indirectly



from members through group contributions; however, most funding is directly from members' individual contributions during the Annual Fund Drive. Our goal this year is \$27,000.

As of January 29, total contributions are only \$2,300, far short of expectations and needs.

Contribution envelopes are available at your group or at the Central Office. Please mail them to the address above..

## A Grapevine Quote of the Day

"As the chaotic world of the drinking alcoholic is replaced by one of stability in sobriety it becomes apparent that plans can be made to encourage positive living. For example: planning holidays, dental appointments and the household budget. We cannot plan that it will be the best holiday ever, that no dental work is required, or that our monetary fortunes will remain the same; that would be projecting. We plan plans, not results."

# The Quest for Power and Humility

At 54, I so disapproved of myself, was so fearful and anxiety-ridden that I invented disguises, deceptions and illusions to keep from being “found out.” I sought isolation, oblivion—even extinction.

In a locked psych unit, a solution rejected before emerged. It competed with my options of institutionalization and suicide. I had little faith anything would work, but memories of the Big Book and of the miracle-working fellowship of A.A. drew me to action.

With persistence and time, I teased out two streams of action to a way out. While many follow different currents, these are mine.

Our Big Book states “Its main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself ...” The 12 & 12 says “... the attainment of greater humility is the foundation principle of each of A.A.’s Twelve Steps.” Is this a contradiction in Bill W.’s purpose? These are not competing aims, but two main elements of the solution to my alcohol and all my other problems. Finding power and attaining humility raised questions: what, where, and how.

The Power is “God as we understood Him,” found “Deep down within us.” Humility is “...a clear recognition of what and who we really are, followed by a sincere attempt to become what we could be.” Both are where my authentic self and potential are buried. How to acquire power and humility is in the Steps, the principles, the kit of spiritual tools, the fellowship of A.A. and sponsorship.

Seeking a Higher Power and my real self are not competing journeys. Both were buried beneath a lifelong accumulation of fears, shame, humiliations, deceptions. From the Higher Power came essential ingredients for a promised fourth dimension of existence, self-consciousness transformed to self-knowledge, dark secrets into assets; life became full. In time, with persistence overcoming resistance, I “stepped from bridge to shore.”

## YOU need to know this

**BEYOND THE ODD POD MEN'S** meeting, held on Saturday at 3 p.m. has disbanded.

If **STEVE D-O**, originally from Rochester, is out there, or if anyone knows his whereabouts, please email newsletter@aasrq.org.

**THE 164 WINNERS** now meets Monday at 8 p.m. at the Palmetto Youth Center, 501 17th Street West.

**PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES** now meets at 8 p.m. on Saturday at St Mary’s Church, 1010 24<sup>th</sup> Ave West in Palmetto.

**LWR AS BILL SEES IT** is a new meeting, held at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday at Harvest Methodist Church, 14306 Covenant Way, Lakewood Ranch.

**THE FRESH START** Group is a new meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday at the Gratitude Room in Bradenton.

**THE SERENITY MEN'S** meeting at 8 p.m. on Wednesday has disbanded.

7 p.m. on Monday and Friday is the new time for the **KENSINGTON PARK GROUP**, at St. James United Methodist Church, 2049 N. Honore in Sarasota.

The **11TH STEP MEDITATION** at the Gratitude Club in Sarasota now meets only on Tuesday at 6:45 p.m. Meetings on Monday and Wednesday, through Sunday, have been canceled.

The **NO NONSENSE GROUP**, which met at 7 p.m. on Wednesday at the Restoration Fellowship Church in Sarasota, has disbanded.

**SARASOTA SUNDAY BEGINNERS** now meets at 7 p.m. at Church of the Palms, 3224 Bee Ridge Road East. The meeting room is off Nelson Street.

The **164 PLUS STUDY GROUP** is a new Big Book meeting at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, at St. Armands Key Lutheran Church. This is a closed discussion meeting. Selections chosen for this meeting include the Preface, the Forwards to the Four Editions, The Doctor’s Opinion, Chapters within pages 1-164 with the Appendices. Bring your Big Book and your 12 & 12.

**SPRING INTO SOBRIETY (SIS) WOMEN'S CONFERENCE** will be held April 19-21 at the Helmsley Sandcastle in Longboat Key. For more information, visit [www.SISconference.com](http://www.SISconference.com).

**AN EVENING WITH BILL W.** Friends of the Pelican 33<sup>rd</sup> group anniversary potluck dinner followed by *Bill W.*, a documentary film. Join us at Roser Church, 512 Pine Ave., Anna Maria, Thurs., Feb. 28, 6-9 p.m. Please bring a covered dish.

**Circuit speaker Roger H.**, who claims “I ain’t right,” will be sharing his experience and story during an open speaker meeting at 7:30 p.m. on March 30 at the Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, 7950 S. Tamiami Trail in Sarasota. He is being hosted by the Make Today Count and Wednesday Night Beginners Men’s groups.

As of 3/1, The **Donut Hour meeting at 10 a.m.** (Mon.-Sat.) will no longer be at South Shore Community Church on South Tuttle. Check here later for new location.



## 3 for February

### Step 3

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

### Tradition 3

The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

### Concept 3

To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A.—the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives—with a traditional “Right of Decision.”

## It's never as bad as it seems

By Mary Jane L.

**A**t a recent job interview, the fellow asked how I liked the iPhone and iPad. I told him I liked the idea of them, but present finances prevented me from having either of them. He said that to handle the job properly, I would need to be available to the main boss constantly. I assured him I had a cell phone, the pay-by-the-minute type.

I instantly internalized the shaming look that he gave me, which reminded me of so many that I had experienced in the past.

Feeling "less than," I drove home fretting over my financial situation. The "check engine" light came on in my 12-year-old car. For distraction, I turned on the television; no picture. I turned on the kitchen light; no lights. My mind headed south as I thought about not having money for a new car or a new TV. Why did I have to lose all my money in the stock market?

I started crying, but decided to go do errands, telling myself, "I'm not going to that noon A.A. meeting, because I don't want to go and I just don't care anymore." As soon as those words registered in my mind, I drove to that meeting. I told on myself, admitting I didn't want to be there, but I came because the solution is in the Steps and at the meetings. The group discussed shame, its effects on us, always lurking like the first drink.

I talked about what happened to me, and asked God to help me. I felt so much better after admitting how I had felt. After the meeting, I stopped at a garage about the "check engine" light. My gas cap was loose. A friend replaced my TV cable, and my kitchen light was repaired at no charge!

About that job ... I never need to let judgmental people make me feel "less than." My sobriety is far more important than any job. Even after more than 37 years of sobriety, I am still learning about myself and what triggers me. The A.A. program and its fellowship continue to renew me.

## New recruitment pamphlet available

**A**n idea in April of 2012 by the coordinator at the Manatee County Jail has resulted in a new Hospital and Institutions volunteer recruitment pamphlet, now available for distribution.

The pamphlet was unanimously approved by the H & I committee, then the District 4 General Service body. It is available on-line (in English and a bit later in Spanish) for your review and use at [http://www.aasrq.org/documents/v8\\_HnI\\_pamphlet.pdf](http://www.aasrq.org/documents/v8_HnI_pamphlet.pdf). This link will bring you directly to the electronic version of the pamphlet. Please be patient. Download times may vary. If you have difficulty with the download, email [hni@aasrq.org](mailto:hni@aasrq.org).

The pamphlets will be available at the Central Office February 17.

*Why this..., continued from page 1*  
A.A. as a whole." It is through our GSRs that the voice of A.A. members are heard all the way to the conference. And, consider this – no GSR, no voice!

As for me, I'm in service for three reasons: 1) Service work represents another level of recovery and gives great opportunities to go beyond my comfort zone and realize my strengths and weaknesses. 2) If you want to really "stick with the winners" you will find them in the service structure. I have met the most talented, genuine and solid A.A. members in service. 3) Service work allows me to express the debt of gratitude I have for A.A. and how this program saved my life and gave my children a different outcome in their lives because they had a sober mom.

So give yourself the gift of a service experience in 2013 and discover the added benefits to your recovery, your growth and your spiritual development.

## Dear Alkie

**Dear Alkie:** How can I find out if I'm an alcoholic who can be a member of Alcoholics Anonymous?

**Alkie:** A person finds their identity by identifying in not out, for without identification A.A. is just information.

**Dear Alkie:** Does A.A. publish a guide on how to live?

**Alkie:** In A.A. no one tells you how to live; they show you how to live.

**Dear Alkie:** You guys talk about humility. Can you give me an example?

**Alkie:** Humility is the ability and willingness to ask for help.

**Dear Alkie:** What's the difference between humility and humiliation?

**Alkie:** Humility is acknowledging your character defects; humiliation is demonstrating them.

**Dear Alkie:** Any other differences?

**Alkie:** Humiliation diminishes self-esteem; humility diminishes self-reliance

**Dear Alkie:** Any way I can test whether I've got humility?

**Alkie:** Humility isn't thinking less of yourself; it's thinking of yourself less.

**Dear Alkie:** Has life changed since you got into A.A.?

**Alkie:** Today I participate in life rather than perform at it, seeking approval.

**Dear Alkie:** Did you have a goal in your life before you got to A.A.?

**Alkie:** All I ever wanted was to get my ducks in a row. Then I got to A.A. and found out they weren't even my ducks!

**Dear Alkie:** You seem so content all of the time. How do you do that?

**Alkie:** Things turn out best for those who make the best out of the way things turn out.

# ANNIVERSARIES

Groups: email birthdays to [newsletter@asrq.org](mailto:newsletter@asrq.org) and put ANNIVERSARIES in the subject line. Deadline for the newsletter is the last day of the month. Do not send anniversaries for future months: i.e. January anniversaries appear in February.

## 63RD AVENUE

### January

Anita 34 years  
Bobbie F. 33 years  
Charlie 3 years  
Murphy 2 years  
Rebecca 2 years  
Robert P. 1 year

## BAY

### December

Rip C. 27 years  
Kate T. 2 years

### January

Jack B. 44 years  
Denise W. 28 years  
Francoise 24 years  
Heather L. 18 years  
Lance B. 16 years  
Susan W. 12 years  
Samantha S. 7 years  
Sam B. 5 years  
Mike P. 2 years

## BEE RIDGE EAST

### January

Joan W. 35 years  
Kathy W. 31 years  
Neal A. 1 year

## EARLY BIRD

### November

Homer H. 22 years

### January

Carol H. 22 years

## FRIENDS OF THE PELICAN

### January

Joe E. 13 years  
Becky M. 6 years  
Betsy L. 3 years  
Karen S. 1 year  
Genie S. 1 year

## FROM THE HEART

### January

Sarah P. 24 years

## HAPPY COOKIE HOUR

### January

Barbara Mc. 31 years  
Brad C. 30 years  
Betsy 27 years  
Bill 25 years  
Ray M. 24 years  
Deb 17 years  
Susan 2 years  
Lisa 2 years  
Valarie F. 1 year  
Jimbo 1 year  
Anneliese 1 yr

## LUNCH BUNCH

### December

Patricia R. 31 years  
Dan B. 30 years

## MONDAY EARLY BIG BOOK

### January

Leo 35 years  
Anne G. 12 years  
Heather 8 years  
Steve T. 6 years

## NEW WOMEN

### December

Dana H. 15 years  
Allyson helC. 7 years  
Jill M. 3 years  
Michele H. 4 years  
Rosemary M. 1 year

### January

Frances 20 years  
Dawn A. 1 year

## OAK STREET STEP

### January

Kathy W. 31 years  
Francoise 24 years  
Sandy J. 22 years  
Susan L. 20 years  
Cris A. 17 years  
Lisa E. 14 years  
Anastasia 12 years  
Sarah McL. 10 years

## SERENITY

### January

Mike K. 33 years  
David M. 14 years  
Ray B. 11 years

## SINGLENESSE OF PURPOSE

### January

Jim D. 30 years  
Elliot S. 19 years

## SOBER LIVING

### January

Laurie C. 3 years

## UNDER THE RAINBOW

### January

Candy P. 7 years  
Murphy 2 years  
Todd F. 1 year  
Vickie S. 1 year

## HELPLINE TOTALS

### JANUARY 2013

Call count..368

#### BREAKDOWN:

Meeting time/location...224

In lieu of 12 step call..... 15

Actual 12 step calls.....9

Al-Anon Call.....30

Special Needs..... 6

Bridge the Gap..... 1

Miscellaneous.....83

The Helpline needs members willing to be on the 12-step call list. Please contact the Helpline at [helpline@asrq.org](mailto:helpline@asrq.org) or Robert Q. at 351-4818.



**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@asrq.org](mailto: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 up to 350 words and 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.