



Sara-Mana Intergroup

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

On the web at aasrq.org



February 2014

Central Office (941-351-4818)

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

More "why not's" on the Steps

Second in a series of a member's look at the Steps and their meaning to his sobriety.

Step Two says. "Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

Why not "Decided God could save us" or "...control our drinking" or "...control our behavior?" The phrasing is looking for inclusiveness, eliminating any objections.

If you were a spiritual black hole like I was when I walked through the doors of A.A., it was too early to use the word God. Just "a power greater..." It can be the group, the program, whatever. Just so you don't think you can do it yourself.

"Came to believe" is gradual. No decision is called for at this time; almost like an observation after the fact. "Sanity" means soundness of mind, soundness of judgment. It doesn't say I'm crazy, which I could reject. It says I haven't been making good decisions. A dear friend of mine suggests to those having difficulty with this step to drop the phrase "to sanity. So the message is "...a power greater than ourselves could RESTORE us"....to heal us, to make us whole.

Anonymous

Serenity Prayer in Spanish

Dios concedeme la serenidad para aceptar las cosas que no puedo cambiar,
Valor para cambiar aquellas que puedo
Y la sabiduria para reconocer la diferencia.

Please support Central Office fund drive

The 2014 fund drive to support our Sara-Mana Central Office began January 1, and is off to a slow start. With a goal of \$28,000, only \$4,000 had been raised as of February 5.

Our Central Office exists to carry the A.A. message to suffering alcoholics and to provide information about A.A. to the community.

The Sara-Mana Central Office handled 3,409 Helpline inquiries last year, answering 12-step calls, providing referrals to Al-Anon and other actions.

The office also supplies A.A. literature, such as Big Books, Twelve Step books and pamphlets, *(See Fund Drive, page 2)*

Help put the Grapevine to use

The Grapevine/La Vina committee requests that home groups consider making gift subscriptions available to the committee year-round.

The Manatee County Jail, in particular, is in need. The Grapevine/La Vina is a familiar opportunity to "carry the message" in area jails.

Anyone with a collection of past issues of Grapevine/La Vina is encouraged to bring those copies to the Central Office at #2, 1748 Independence Blvd. in Sarasota. An alternative would be to contact the Grapevine committee and we will be happy to pick them up at your home. Contact the committee at grapevine@aasrq.org

Yes, alcohol can do for or to one

I was a fun loving, thrill seeking, boisterous, outgoing, Type A kind of gal who enjoyed drinking for a long time.

There weren't many consequences in the beginning other than the blackouts, but I learned to work around those pretty quickly.

From high school to my late thirties, people would say that I could hold a lot of liquor. It was true, I always seemed to have a pretty good tolerance. And I remember that I took great pride in people saying that to me – like it was a positive thing!

In the beginning, alcohol did a lot of things for me. I spoke better, was funnier, easier to get along with, fit in, and even danced better. In the end, alcohol did a lot of things to me: made me anti-social, paranoid, frightened of being found out, and most shameful of all, a liar.

My last days of drinking will never be forgotten. That totally lost feeling, demoralization of where alcohol had taken me. But then came that night that I skulked into the rooms of A.A. and heard people share about hope. Could this possibly work? The more I kept coming back, the easier it became to believe that the people in the rooms had been just like me when they drank, and that now they had found a new way of living. The simplest of words: Keep coming back. And that's what I did.

And the people of A.A., through their example, taught a newcomer a new way of life. I pray I can do for the newcomer what was so generously done for me.

AnnT.

A GRAPEVINE

Quote of the Day

"I am learning how to cope with life, people, and situations, not as I want them to be, but as they really are."

TRADITIONS COMMITTEE IS BACK!

We are breathing new life into the Traditions Committee.

Please join us Wednesday, February 5th at 6:30 p.m. at the Central Office. We will be utilizing the DVD Bill W. shares on the traditions. In addition, we would like to brainstorm at our first meeting to find some methods of bringing this committee back to life.

We welcome your input and suggestions.. Coffee and cookies will be available for your enjoyment.

Fund drive, continued from page 1 as well as materials, including medallions for groups.

The Central Office is 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, the website (aasrq.org) is maintained to provide information and materials to members and potential members. This monthly newsletter is funded by and made available to all district groups.

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 GRAPEVINE

Quote of the Day

"I didn't need to learn how to meditate before meditating. It turned out to be one of those learn-as-you-go things -- just as learning how to stay sober is part of staying sober a day at a time."

YOU need to know this

See and hear Bill Wilson tell his own story! The DVD of "Bill's Story" will be shown by your District 4 General Service Literature Committee on Tuesday, February 25th at 6 p.m. at Central Office (please use rear entrance). The literature containing our message of recovery is not just books and pamphlets, but also DVD's and cassettes, among many other items. If possible (but not necessary) RSVP to literature@aasrq.org so I know how much popcorn to make! Don L. - District 4 General Service Literature Committee Chairperson



Parrish 11th step meeting has been CANCELED.

Cookie Hour HAS NOT MOVED YET but, STAY TUNED, the Cookie Hour Saga continues.

The Florida A.A. Archives Workshop will be held February 15 at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Winter Park. The event begins with a 9 a.m. breakfast, followed by five 45-minute sessions, and will end with a 4 p.m. historical speaker. Workshop topics include getting started in archives, basic archival procedures, digitizing, oral histories, plus copyright and fair use. The event is committed to helping district, intergroup and area A.A. archivists, chairs of those committees, as well as committee members. Registration for the free workshop can be made by contacting archives@area15aa.org or archives@aanorthflorida.org.

MOTHERS & INFANTS program needs women with one year of sobriety to take meetings to them once a month. Contact ldross@comcast.net or call 941-320-8389.

For up-to-date changes please check the website Where & When at aasrq.org. Click on the meeting tab at the top of the page.

3 for February

Step 2

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Tradition 2

For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

Concept 2

When, in 1955, the A.A. groups

confirmed the permanent charter for their General Service Conference, they thereby delegated to the Conference complete authority for the active maintenance of our world services and thereby made the Conference — excepting for any change in the Twelve Traditions or in Article 12 of the Conference Charter — the actual voice and the effective conscience for our whole Society.

Ouch! Don't let resentment get you like it did this man in the program

The big book says “resentment is the number one offender” and is responsible for lots of relapses. But, that didn't seem to apply to this one. I had a damn good reason to be resentful, and I was completely in the right.

Two years before I quit drinking, I was crazy about a girlfriend. She was a wonderful person, and could even keep up with me when I was drinking. The only problem with our relationship was that she was not as committed to it as I was. In fact, she had another boyfriend. I'll call him Fred.

One evening I went to her apartment and she was in bad shape. She had black eyes and a busted lip. She told me that Fred had gotten upset and beat her up pretty badly. I was enraged.

The next night, I went to the bar where Fred was a bartender and a bouncer; it was a pretty rough place. I got good and drunk and then shot my mouth off at Fred. I belittled him in front of his friends and eventually called him out.

Fred was a big and athletic guy. By the time we were ready to fight, all his friends from the bar were gathered around us. So, to show off, Fred decided to fight me with one hand

behind his back. I didn't care, I just wanted to hurt him. But it didn't turn out that way; Fred beat the snot out of me. With one hand behind his back. Now, in addition to my original anger, I was also humiliated.

That's when the resentment grew. It was entirely righteous; I was completely right and he was completely wrong. If there was ever a justified resentment, I had it. I hated Fred; I wanted to hurt him badly or to destroy him. I lost sleep because I would wake up hating Fred and plotting against him. If I met anyone with the name “Fred” I almost immediately disliked him. Anything that reminded me of Fred would make the resentment rise in my throat like bile. What made it worse was that my ignominious defeat was so humiliating that I couldn't even talk about this resentment to anyone.

Time passed. The girlfriend moved to New York. I moved to Chicago. I got sober. I moved to Tampa and got sober the rest of the way. But the resentment didn't go away. I still dreamed of how I would get back at Fred.

One year, I went to New York for a week during the winter. I looked up the old girlfriend, and we had a nice evening together. But at one point, somehow, the subject of Fred came up. I immediately showed my ongoing resentment by cursing about him and carrying on.

She stopped me asking “Bill are you still angry at him”?

“Of course I am, after what he did to you” and I began to elaborate.

“But Bill,” she interrupted “don't you know — he died in a car-crash four years ago.”

About Bringing a Drunk Home

A guy was in a bar about as drunk as it's possible to get. Some guys noticed his condition and decided to be good Samaritans and take him home.

First, they stand him up to get to his wallet so they can find out where he lives, but he keeps falling down. He fell down eight more times on the way to the car, each time with a real thud.

After they get to his house, he falls down another four times getting him to the door. His wife comes to the door, and one guy says, “We brought your husband home.”

The wife asks, “Where's his wheelchair?”

Get your Sara-Mana Newsletter emailed to you in a PDF format each month. Email igsecretary@aasrq.org and ask to be on the list.

Dear Alkie

Dear Alkie: I hear that the 4th Step is painful. If that's so, why do it?

Alkie: Because what you don't feel, you can't heal.

Dear Alkie: But does it have any practical effects?

Alkie: The 4th Step revised my reality and my history.

Dear Alkie: What does that mean?

Alkie: That my life had two parts: What happened and what I think happened.

Dear Alkie: But what did you end up seeing about yourself?

Alkie: The 4th Step showed me who I was without God.

Dear Alkie: I just can't seem to get started. Why is that?

Alkie: Blocks to taking the 4th Step are ego and/or inertia.

Dear Alkie: I really think it will be too painful to look at my past. What do you say to that?

Alkie: The Steps are about relieving our pain. We have to name it, claim it, and reframe it to be rid of it or, in other words, face it, embrace it, and erase it!

Dear Alkie: But I can see that I caused a lot of harm by being so self-centered. Will the steps help me with those feelings of guilt?

Alkie: You are only guilty of something if you intended to cause harm.

Dear Alkie: I also hear that I'll change if I do this Step? The truth is I'm really afraid of change so please, give me one good reason for doing this.

Alkie: If you don't change, your sobriety date will!

Dear Alkie: But all I want is some peace of mind. How am I going to get that if I'm looking at all the harm I did?

Alkie: The search for serenity often begins by taking us further from it.

ANNIVERSARIES

Groups: email birthdays to newsletter@asrsq.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. January anniversaries appear in February.

ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

January

Deb L. 18 years
Stu W. 15 years
Liz A. 12 years
Bob B. 9 years

BEE RIDGE EAST

January

Joan W. 36 years
Kathy W. 32 years
Neal A. 2 years

BIG BOOK

January

Heather 19 years
Anne G. 13 years
Steve T. 7 years

EARLY BIRD

January

Carol H. 23 years

GULF GATE NOON

January

Lisa M. 31 years
Mark P. 7 years
Keith P. 6 years
Erin 5 years
Joan W. 4 years
Chad S. 2 years
Chrissy 2 years
Marie W. 1 year

HAPPY COOKIE HOUR

January

Barbara J. 32 years
Brad 31 years
Betsy B. 28 years
Bill K. 26 years
Chris K. 25 years
Susan L. 21 years
Christina H. 7 years
Susan S. 3 years
Tyler 1 year

LAKWOOD RANCH

12&12

January

Pat Mc. 9 years
Vicki S. 2 years

MONDAY NIGHT MEN'S

January

Sean M. 16 years
Pete M. 1 year

NORTH RIVER MONDAY NITE

January

Tony F. 28 years
Diane S. 8 years

OAK STREET

January

Kathy W. 31 years
Francoise 24 years
Sandy J. 22 years
Lisa E. 14 years
Anastasia 13 years

ST. ARMAND'S

January

Ellen J. 25 years
Francoise 25 years
Stephanie R. 10 years
Brenda B. 4 years
Kelly E. 4 years
Mary Beth C. 4 years
Janet W. 3 years
Mike C. 2 years

SERENITY

January

John R. 42 years
Patricia I. 35 years
Eddie J. 25 years
David M. 15 years
Ray B. 12 years
Jim M. 6 years
Howard B. 5 years

SOBER LIVING

January

Laurie C. 4 years
Miriam S. 1 year

SUNRISE

January

Mike L. 5 years

UNDER THE RAINBOW

January

Arleen B. 28 years
Candy P. 8 years
Rex M. 6 years
Murphy 3 years
Todd F. 2 years
Vickie S. 2 years

HELPLINE TOTALS

January 2014

Call count.....269

BREAKDOWN:

Meeting time/location.210

In lieu of 12 step call.....8

Actual 12 step calls.....13

Al-Anon Call.....13

Special Needs.....4

Miscellaneous.....29

Spanish Helpline.....2

Only two Helpline shifts are currently available: 3 p.m.-6 p.m. and 9 p.m.-12 mid-night. Please call Central Office at (941) 351-4818.

Remember a night like this one?

The other night, I was invited out for a night with "the girls." I told my husband that I would be home by midnight. "I promise," were my last words.

The hours passed and the margaritas went down way too easily and around 3 a.m. we piled into a cab and headed to our respective homes, quite inebriated.

Just as I walked through the door, the cuckoo clock in the hall started up and cuckooed three times! Realizing that my husband would probably wake up to this, I quickly cuckooed another nine times. I was quite pleased with myself for coming up with such a quick witted solution to cover up my tardiness. Even with my impaired judgment, I could count three cuckoos plus nine cuckoos equaled twelve cuckoos.

The next morning, my husband asked me what time I got in, and confidently, I replied, "Midnight...like I promised." He didn't even raise an eyebrow and went on reading the paper.

After a moment, he replied, "I think we might need a new cuckoo clock."

A bit nervously, I asked him why, to which he responded: "Well, last night our clock cuckooed three times, then said, 'Oh, crap,' cuckooed four more times, cleared it's throat, cuckooed another three times, giggled, cuckooed twice more, then tripped over the coffee table and farted."

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@asrsq.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.