



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.

March 2014

Central Office (941)-351-4818

Sara-Mana District 4, Area

Grapevine Story-Telling Workshop

General Service's Grapevine Committee helps in telling the community about the wonderful recovery magazine offered by A.A.

The committee has scheduled a *Grapevine Story Telling Workshop* for 6 p.m. on April 23. The event will take place at the Central Office.

A.A.ers are invited to bring story ideas and "have fun sharing our experience, strength and hope." Cookies and refreshments will be provided, and attendees are asked to RSVP to grapevine@aasrq.org.

Lecture Time

A somewhat intoxicated man was stopped by the police around 2 a.m. and was asked where he was going at that time of night.

The man replied, "I'm on my way to a lecture about alcohol abuse and the effects it has on the body, as well as smoking and staying out late."

The officer then asked, "Really? Who's giving that lecture at this time of night?"

The man replied, "That would be my wife."

New Editor

Returning as editor of this newsletter is Edgar C., who will carry on the excellent work done by Larry M. during his editorship the last two years. Edgar was editor for four years prior to rotation out of the post in 2012. Contact Edgar directly at edgarc@aol.com or at newsletter@aasrq.org.



Founders Day Dinner
June 14.
5:30 p.m.
Bahia Vista Mennonite Church

Fund Drive Accelerates, Still Needs YOU

As in years past, the Central Office Fund Drive got off to a slow start but has turned the corner in recent weeks. As of Feb. 27, our contribution total was \$17,000, slightly ahead of this time in the past several years.

As you know our goal last year was \$27,000. We exceeded it, ending 2013 with \$32,000 of individual contributions. This made up for the 3% reduction in sales due to the discontinued sale of non-AA material. The generosity of our members has been overwhelming in past years but we are not there yet.

Our goal this year is \$28,000, so please continue to help get the word out in your groups that the Central Office needs your continued support. Without your help and individual contributions we cannot maintain what we have all come to know as the Best Central Office in South Florida.—*Tony F*

Step 3: God, as We Understood Him.

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

STEP THREE. *Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood him.*

Many of us, myself included, would probably not be here were it not for those four words "as we understood him," which was an addendum to the original line. Again, nothing to object to; no dogma to swallow, just MY conception of God.

Earlier in my life I rejected all other conceptions of God, and there is no doubt in my mind I would have done it again if you asked me to swallow some A.A. definition of God.

But perhaps the most important word in the step was one that I totally missed initially. It doesn't say we turn our will and lives over to God. It says we turn our will and our lives over to the CARE of God." Whoa! I didn't see that word.

So God will take care of me; so I have to decide to trust that God will take care of me. It is extremely difficult to trust God will take care of me when I am not trustworthy myself, so this leads us right to step four. I need to "clean up" my life and my will so I can follow through on my decision to turn them over.—

Anonymous 1

How AA Helped Ease Tragic Time

By Bob L., Better Attitudes Group

Last year on December 18 my wife was diagnosed with fourth stage cancer of the brain, liver, lymph nodes, lungs and bone. She had no real symptoms but when having her annual physical a few weeks prior she told the doctor she was having headaches and shoulder pain from time to time. She felt the headaches were probably due to needing new eye-glasses and the shoulder pain resulted from going to the gym 5 days a week. To be on the safe side he ordered further tests and lab work. Thus the diagnosis.

On our first visit to the oncologist she asked how all this could be happening when she felt so well. The reply was that from all her exercise and aerobics she was outwardly in fine shape. Soon the symptoms manifested and the decline began.

At first, Kate refused chemo and radiation. After being told she would have about a year if she agreed to one round of each she consented. The chemo was especially difficult. The radiation seemed not so debilitating. After a short time she was too weak to continue treatments and died 8 weeks after the diagnosis.

I have been around AA for 41 years and have been sober 40 years. We had been married 47 years, with a short sabbatical at the height of my drinking. She was a tried and true Al Anon, as was I for the past several years.

After her passing I was lost. I was sad, upset, lonely and confused. My children and grandchildren were equally torn and life became more of a chore than an adventure. There were many times when around the house I would have an overwhelming urge to get the hell out of there, and thank God I had AA and Al Anon to run to. It never crossed my mind to have a drink but the meetings were a safe place and provided comfort. I seldom spoke up during the meetings but felt secure being there with my friends. For several



We may not have thousands of attendees as the International did a few years back in Toronto (above), but we will have hundreds from all over Florida when District 4 hosts the first quarterly in 2015.

months I averaged 3 meetings a day, and now, 11 months later as I write this, I still average 2 a day. Everyone has been so kind and supportive. Two in particular – one from each organization – have taken me under their wings. One I have known for many, many years but not well. Today we talk and make contact almost every day. The other I have known briefly but he has been supportive and understanding and helped me through many tough days. Some days are tougher than others and for no apparent reason I sometimes break out crying.

All I can say is – thank you, God, thank you God, thank you God – for AA and Al Anon and for all the wonderful members and for their support and love. I am blessed to have such good friends.

HELPLINE TOTALS

February 2014 Calls 279

BREAKDOWN:

Meeting time/location 202

In lieu of 12 step call 9

Actual 12 step calls 12

Al-Anon Call 14

Special Needs 0

Miscellaneous 42

Spanish Helpline

Three Helpline shifts are available: Wed. 3-6 p.m, Sat. 6-9, and Sun. 12-3. Please call Central Office at (941) 351-4818.

Dist. 4 Inventory: How're We Doing?

General Service invites all District 4 members to participate in and attend a [District inventory](#). An inventory helps us to make sure we are remaining true to the basic principles and traditions of our Fellowship and maintaining a solid foundation for the future. Central Office has the Inventory form available or you can go to the website: www.aasrq.org, click the link at the top for Committees, click General Service and half way down the page is a hyperlink for the 2014 Inventory.

Your participation is needed, as General Service can only improve with your input. If you have any questions, please see Laurie M. or Simonne C

How to Come Back from that Relapse

About.com Alcoholism is a useful online reference to our "ism." It's a lot like attending a friendly meeting for the first time. The site recently contained this advice from a relapser on coming back: :

1. Decide when you will return to A.A. Mark it on your calendar and get all the alcohol out of your house.
2. Do not go to friends' houses/ outings/activities where you know there will be alcohol for at LEAST 3-4 months after sobriety begins
3. If you are a heavy drinker, get medical management either out-patient or in-patient. You may need some short-term drugs to help withdrawal symptoms, though not everyone does. See your doctor and tell him what you are about to do.
4. Enlist community resources. Try five different A.A. meetings to see if there is something—or someone—you can relate to.

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Get your Sara-Mana Newsletter emailed to you in a PDF format each month. Email secretary@aaasrq.org

Complacency, Denial—And Then the Fall

By Jim L.

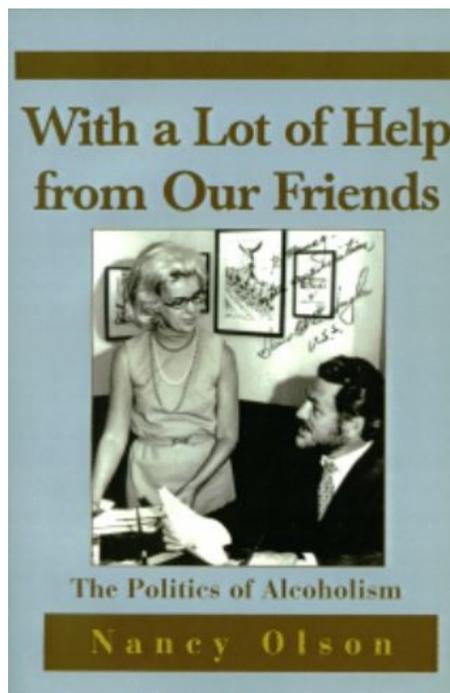
I am a long term practicing and a short term recovering alcoholic. I drank daily for many decades; this time my recovery can be counted in many months. It's not that I didn't know I had a problem. In the 1980's, I joined A.A., worked the program and enjoyed a few years of sobriety. In fact, I did some service work by going to a nearby rehab facility to share my experience, strength and hope with those seeking help.

How ironic to hear a well-known and respected member of local A.A. recently share the beginnings of his recovery almost 30 years ago at the very facility, at about the same time, where I pontificated. Imagine me, a failed drunk, trying to teach a guy with serious long term sobriety all those years ago.

What happened? It wasn't that I was insincere; it may have been I was too comfortable in the early stages of my sobriety. I came to believe I would never drink again — I had this thing licked. Complacency took over and denial was let out of its cage. My meeting schedule shrunk and I drifted away. Life was good (so I thought) and the "yets" didn't happen.

What brings this high bottom drunk back to A.A.? A total sense of isolation — that I lost interest in living despite having everything that could reasonably be wanted.

What have I learned? I have an inherited allergy to alcohol. Sobriety takes work — not unpleasant work but a sustained daily effort. I can't do this by myself—all elements of A.A. are important but the human contact through the fellowship and my sponsor is vital. It's true alcohol is cunning, baffling, powerful and patient—just waiting for me to try to take control again.



A.A. Reading

Nancy Olson, *With a Lot of Help from Our Friends: The Politics of Alcoholism*, March 2003, ISBN 0-595-27037-9, This book tells the inside story of government attempts to deal with the American alcohol problem from 1970 to 1980, the most important decade in the history of alcohol legislation since Prohibition, with the famous Hughes Act as its centerpiece. We meet the friends and supporters of Harold Hughes, the charismatic senator from Iowa, and Marty Mann, the "first lady of Alcoholics Anonymous."

3 for March

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."

Dear Alkie

I am newly sober and going on a cruise in two weeks. I was told that most cruise ships have meetings on them every day. How do I find them?

You will probably be given a schedule of all the cruise activities and they'll list their meeting. If not, ask the purser. When I first got sober I was going on a plane. I was very nervous about flying without alcohol. Someone in my home group told me to post a sign near the kitchen saying "Friend of Bill in Seat whatever." So I did it. Would you believe a man actually came to see me? It happened that the seat next to him was empty. We talked the entire trip. It was an incredible experience and not once did I even think about drinking.

I've been sober almost 10 years. I still go to a lot of meetings and call my sponsor at least once a week. Yet I've been feeling depressed lately. Am I doing something wrong?

Well, the first thing I'd advise is to step up your meetings. If you go to five meetings a week, make it nine. And call your sponsor every day for a while. Also, share about how you're feeling at your home group. (I hope you have one). Try these suggestions for a few weeks. If you're still feeling down, why not go to a professional. Make sure it's someone who knows about our disease. Many of us find this to be extremely helpful

What exactly is a sponsor?

A sponsor is a mentor, a teacher and a friend — all wrapped into one person. It is required in most groups that sponsors have at least a year of sobriety. Remember this: the men with the men. The women with the women. It would be best if you choose someone right away, as soon as you start AA. We call these temporary sponsors to begin with. If the chemistry is right between you, this person will become your permanent sponsor. If not, find someone else.

ANNIVERSARIES

Groups: email birthdays to newsletter@asrq.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. February anniversaries appear in March.

63RD AVENUE GROUP

JANUARY

Anita S 35 years
Bobbie F 34 years
David M. 15 years
Charlie 4 years
Warren H. 3 years
Murphy 3 years

FEBRUARY

Peggy F. 38 years
Mike C 32 years
Larry S 31 years
N Jim 24 years
David B 10 years

ANYBODY'S GROUP

February

Mike C. 32 years
Larry S 31 years

ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

February

Patrick M. 29 years
Andrea H. 27 years

BEE RIDGE EAST

February

Bill H. 35 years

FROM THE HEART

February

Lil K. 38 years
Janna O. 30 years
Barb R. 1 year

GULF GATE NOON

FEBRUARY

Jack L. 40 years
Bob K 38 years
Ross B. 34 years
Mike 5 Years

HAPPY COOKIE HOUR

FEBRUARY

Shaun S 25 years
Peg S 21 Years
Jerry D 6 years

Patrick O 3 years
Scotty T 3 years
Bart M 2 years
Kathleen T 2 Years
Nancy M 1 year

KENSINGTON PARK

FEBRUARY

Becky C 4 years
Annie H 1 year

LAKEWOOD RANCH 12&2

February

Dennis V. 32 years
Michelle D. 22 years

LUNCH BUNCH

JANUARY

Ed 31 years
Kipling 2 years

February

Tom 47 years
John 41 years
Cody 25 years
Sam 14 years
Tom C. 3 years

OAK STREET

February

Bill H. 34 years
Diana E. 27 years
Cynthia M. 21 years
Michelle DeS. 21 years
Howard W. 20 years
Charlotte B. 17 years
Ann C. 13 years
Natalie T. 13 years
Karen C. 12 years
Grafti O. 7 years
Helen Y. 5 years

PRIMARY PORPOISE

January

Jane R 28 years
Pam C. 21 years
Sarah M 11 years

February

Judy J 32 years
John G. 17 years

SERENITY GROUP

February

Keith B. 42 years
Peggy F. 38 years
Bari R. 35 years
Mike K. 34 years
Rick H. 17 years
Barbara S. 6 years
Mark T. 2 years

SINGLENES OF PURPOSE

February

Ray C 38 years
Barry D 5 years

THIRD LEGACY Men's

January

Elliott S. 20 years
Garry B. 12 years
John B. 9 years

UNDER THE RAINBOW

February

Dave C. 25 years
Katie M. 12 years
Mary H. 8 years
Larry M. 7 years

WOMEN IN THE SOLUTION

February

Helen Y 6 years
Sandy C. 2 years



YOU need to know this

A new issue of *Where and When*, District 4's directory provided by Intergroup, lists the more than 350 meetings held in the district each week. The newest issue will be available at Central Office before the end of the month.

Social Calendar

District-wide social gatherings of Sara-Mana District 4 are now almost completely scheduled for the year. They are:

GRAPEVINE

WORKSHOP: April 23

FOUNDERS DAY

DINNER: June 14

DELEGATE'S

REPORT: Date to be announced

GRATITUDE

DINNER: Nov. 15

OPEN HOUSE AT CENTRAL OFFICE: Dec. 6

NEW YEAR'S EVE DANCE.



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. 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