



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 differ-
ence.

MARCH 2015

Central Office (941) 351-4818

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15



A.A. 2015 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

JULY 2 - 5, 2015 • ATLANTA, GEORGIA

3 WAYS TO REGISTER *Online: www.aa.org *Fax: (508) 743-3605 *Mail

2015 International Convention, ICAA075 • c/o Convention Data Services • 107 Waterhouse Road • Bourne, MA 02532

“I Don’t Even Know His Name, Yet I’ll Never Forget Him”

By William G.

I must have known I was spiritually sick because I spent decades looking for someone with the answer. Gurus, yogis, fools on the hill; experts, therapists, money-seeking skills. I never bought it. Every Ashram, commune and New Age Temple I visited, for all their highfalutin’ talk, seemed fraught with sex scandals, rampant drug use, and perpetual money problems. What these places had in common is their teaching of a power greater FOR yourself - “You are God”.

And when the ego gets fed, predictable results ensue.

Then one day I received the Grace that led me to my first A.A. meeting where I was fortunate enough to receive the warm welcome that often characterizes our fellowship. I was greeted by a good “Ol’ Timer” with a simple handshake and a sincere “How are you?” This was my first taste of a spirituality that clearly worked and maybe could work for me.

Whatever was in those kind, wise eyes, I wanted and I bought.

I could see and sense that this was the real deal. No fancy talk, no requests for money, no demands that I believe or conform and amazingly, no drug use, no money problems and

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Another A.A. Triangle, to go with the traditional Unity-Service-Recovery symbol.

2015 Fund Drive Half Way Home; Needs Help

As in years past, the Central Office Fund Drive got off to a slow start but has turned the corner. As of March 3, our total was \$12,000.00, slightly below last year’s halfway point.

We ended the 2014 drive with \$32,000 of individual contributions; the initial goal was \$28,000. Your contributions made up for the 3% reduction in sales due to the discontinued sale of non-A.A. material. The generosity of our members has been overwhelming but we are not there yet.

Our goal this year is \$30,000 so please help get the word out in your groups that the Central Office needs your continued support. Without your help and individual contributions we cannot afford or maintain what we have all come to know as the Best Central Office in South Florida.

—Central Office Board

Many Opportunities For Service: How You Can Give Back to A.A.

By Barb T, GSO Chair

General Service in District 4 has unique ways to be of service to our fellowship. There is no way to explain General Service better than Bill W did in 1951 in the A.A. Service Manual pp S1 & S2:

“Our Twelfth Step carrying the message is the basic service that A.A. Fellowship gives: this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven’t been given the truth may die.

“Hence, an A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer—ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.’s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all of these is our Third Legacy of Service.”

If you would like to know more about the Services offered, attend a General Service District Meeting the third Saturday of every month (except June and December) at Central Office, 1748 Independence Blvd., Sarasota, Florida.

Please check the aasrq.org

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Back of the Book

Gutter Bravado

The stories in the back of the Big Book are the ones that Bill Wilson thought the most important, yet they are often overlooked. Readers are invited to supply a favorite thought or theme from a story, as Bob K has done below.

There were many things that I related to in this story in the Big Book. I smiled when I saw the quote, "God help me. If you get me out of this one, I'll never do it again." I must have said that or "I'll never drink again" hundreds of times. Of course, that never happened. Even though I had the best intentions, I had to drink again. I was trapped in a sea of alcohol. I had no freedom. Alcohol was the center of my life. It was my hobby, my friend. I needed it for courage to do almost everything. A case in point, I was dating a wonderful lady. We went out both Friday and Saturday nights and I called her sorority house every night during the week. I had to have several drinks before I could get up the nerve to call her. I was painfully shy around women. Anyway, I ruined that relationship by my drinking.

I would go into a bar with the intention of having just one or two glasses of beer and couldn't stop. Booze ran my life. After many car wrecks, loss of family and becoming unemployable, I had enough. I finally surrendered and went to an A.A. meeting. Someone said that I couldn't possibly get drunk if I didn't pick up the first drink. I was astonished. After 25 years of heavy drinking, I never figured that out. I was hooked. I met so many wonderful people that were happy and leading such good lives, I wanted what they had. I threw myself into the program and never looked back. After two failed marriages, I married another recovering alcoholic and life gets better and better as time goes on. I've been with my sober wife more than 30 years. Sobriety is the answer for me.

When I pray now, I thank God for my sobriety and ask him to keep me sober today. I ask him for his guidance for any situation that comes up. He does answer my prayers in his way, not mine.

The Value of That First Greeting

(Continued from Page 1)

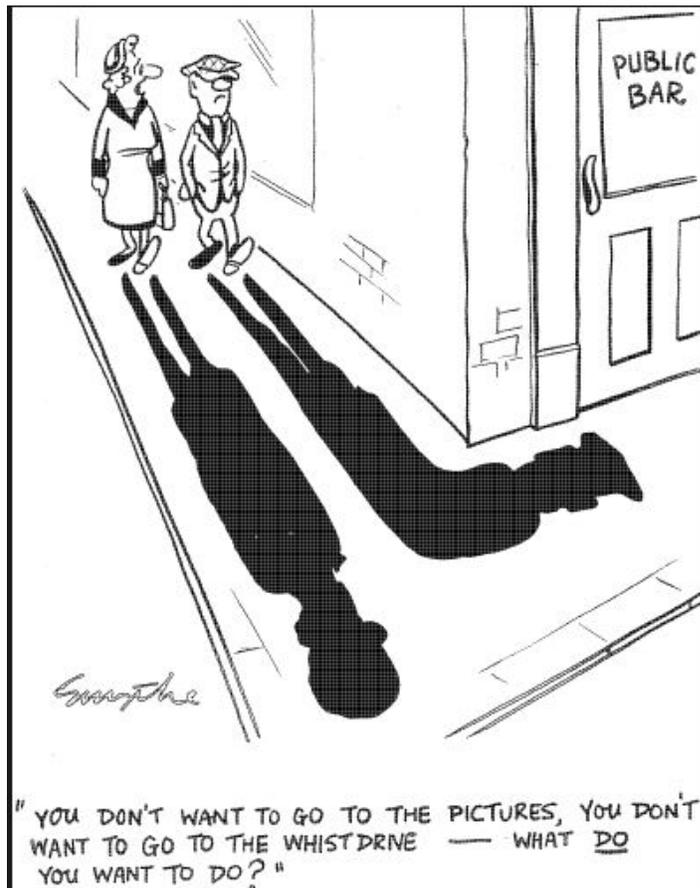
very little sexual scandal ("We are not Saints"!)

I didn't realize at the time that this was "the last house on the block." Had I not found it, I may have ended up joining a sect, shaving my head, and spending another decade in a foggy and vain search for a solution that could only come from surrendering to a power greater than myself.

We often say that newcomers are the most important people in the room. For this alcoholic, that honor goes to the good Ol' Timer who gave me that simple handshake. I don't even know his name, yet I'll never forget him.

*In A.A., you can retrieve your future
from the wreckage of your past . . .*

Heard at a meeting



Turned Life Over to the Group

How She "Became Willing"

I made the smallest beginning in gaining willingness by turning my life over to the group. I started doing some of the things they suggested, like asking God for help in the morning, then thanking Him/Her at night. I got a sponsor and started doing the things she suggested.

After a few months, I realized that I had not thought of drinking in a while, that I felt better and somewhat happier. That's about the time that I knew I was willing to go to any lengths to stay sober and the door of willingness opened wide.

Opportunities for Service

(Continued from Page 1)

website for the calendar which lists the Committees and their meeting days and times. There are an abundance of opportunities for service: Archives, Literature, Grapevine, Special Needs, Events, Hospitals and Institutions, Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community. In addition, General Service supports the Delegate's Report and Founder's Day Dinner. Each month we will highlight what each of our Committees do and opportunities to participate. We hope to see you!

Seems Fitting

*The first A.A. convention was held in the
Emerson Bromo-Seltzer Tower in Baltimore*

One Man's View of What A.A. Really Is

By Anonymous

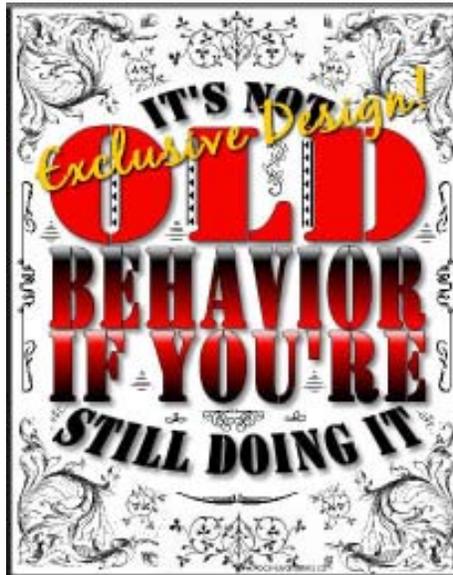
We are indeed a sensitive bunch of folks just like the Big Book says. Sometimes that works to our advantage — sometimes not. The effort we expend trying to resolve these stress points sometimes leads us down rabbit holes we wouldn't normally go down.

Over my years trying to do this deal (36 Of them) I've been every personality the BB talks about, and I've made most of the mistakes that Bill W. says we will make if we stay around long enough. I've been the bleeding deacon, and I've given advice in areas where I'm not qualified to advise anybody, and I've had the same done to me.

Here's one thing I know for sure — never—not once—in all that time have ANY of the players had any intent to hurt me — nor me them. Every mistake I have ever seen made between people in A.A. has been the result of ignorance of the proper methods, lack of experience, sometimes poor sponsorship, and at times an over-zealous desire to help others and share what we each have found trying to work a divinely crafted program with a human crafted body and mind.

One other quick point and I'll bug out. I hear lots of concern about "The dilution of A.A." With all the hype and media glitz, many of us feel we are "entitled" to a specific behavior from our partner. The rooms and the program of Alcoholics Anonymous taught me long ago not to have expectations about anything. I still tend to have expectations regarding the children's behavior and schooling, but that's more in the mode of attempting to teach them manners, personal hygiene, and good study habits and expecting them to practice them on a regular basis to develop good habits to carry them through life.

A.A. is not a place or a thing or any specific person. A.A. is an idea — an ideal way to live life that each and every one of us will very likely NOT be able to live up to most of the time. But we can try...



The Best Outcome is Just and Equitable

Looking ahead to this day, I may face a possible conflict with another person over a certain issue. How should I respond to this?

If I'm to follow my principles, I should hold to the idea of seeking the best outcome for everybody concerned.

It may be very harmful to look at these conflicts as a case of winning or losing. If I seem to win when I'm wrong, I will lose in the long run. If I seem to lose even when I'm right, I can know that there's just resolution of everything in time.

I will always win, however, if I keep my thinking straight and take care to avoid resentment and bitterness. —Anonymous

Jane Drury

Jane Drury passed on February 28, 2015. Jane served as District 4 Chair 2011-2012; she was a wonderful person, great friend, and loving servant. She will be missed by all.

Jane's Celebration of Life was scheduled for Sunday, March 22, 2015 at 3:00 p.m., at St. Wilfred Episcopal Church, 3773 Wilkinson Rd., Sarasota, FL 34233. Refreshments / Fellowship were to follow. In lieu of flowers please give to the charity of your choice in Jane Drury's name.

Dear Alkie

"Alkie" is a long-time member of A.A. His comments are based on his own strength, hope, and experience and are not reflections of any official A.A. position or practice.

Q. I was a long term daily drinker; about a year ago I began having blackouts, so I joined A.A. I've been going to meetings, whenever I can, and feel good. Problem is I recently went to a friend's retirement party and had a few glasses of wine. Nothing bad happened and haven't had a drink since then. Does this count as a "slip"?

A. Don't spill coffee in my lap and tell me it's raining — it's a relapse and you've just been going to meetings, not joining A.A. The first drink didn't make you drunk, but worse, it convinced you you're not powerless over alcohol. Good news is many A.A.'s have picked up more than one white chip. You WILL eventually stop drinking — the easy way (true A.A. membership) or the hard way (graveside services). So, join the fellowship for real (90 meetings in 90 days, no fooling and a temporary sponsor would be a good start). And welcome home!

Q. My brother-in-law says he's a social drinker. How do I tell if that's true?

A. Few things are certain in this life, but "normies" tend to have telltale signs. If he says things like "I'm hungry so let's eat", or "It's time to go home," and the clincher "no thanks, I've had enough," then chances are he's not one of us. On the other hand, if you are reading this newsletter, chances are you are not one of them.

Q. Some people call their sobriety anniversary a "birthday." Seems like a curious use of the word — why call it that?

A. Our biological birthday is the day God gives life to us. Our A.A. birthday is when we give our lives back to God! The 3rd month is when we focus on the 3rd step — turning over our will and lives to the care of God as we understand Him!

ANNIVERSARIES

Groups: email birthdays to newsletter@AAsrq.org and put ANNIVERSARIES in the subject line. Cutoff for the newsletter is the last day of the month. February anniversaries appear in March.

(As the) 1st 100

January	
Jefferey L.	4
February	
Jen L.	25
Bill L.	19
Matt M.	13

63rd Ave

January	
Anita S.	36
Bobbie F.	35
David M.	16
Warren H.	4
Murphy	4
February	
Peggy F.	39
Vickie C.	33
Mike C.	33
Larry S.	32
N. Jim	25
David B.	11

Attitude Adjustment

January	
Deb L.	19
Stu W.	16
Liz A.	13
Bob B.	10

Donut Hour

February	
Bill H	36
Kathy B	23
Sam R	15
Donna Fowler	12
John B	7
Sharon T	6
Sandy C	4

Friends of the Pelican

February	
Norman D.	33
Jay C.	18
Barbara S.	3

Gulf Gate Noon

February	
Tom B	48
Jack L	41
Bob K	39
Ross	35
Betsy	26
Joan	5
Chris E	1

Happy Cookie Hour

January	
Barbara J.	33
Betsy B.	29
Bill K.	27
Joan G.	13
Sam S.	9
Kristina	8
Susan S.	4
Ashley K.	1

Monday Night Men's

February	
Frank S.	5

Oasis

February	
Helen. Y.	7
Jim C.	4
Johnny J.	3
Gene P.	3
Sue H.	2

Serenity Group

February	
Bari R.	36
Rick H.	18
Sean T.	12
Barbara S.	7
Mark T.	3

Sober Living March

Jeff M.	25
Joan Be.	3

St. Armand's February

John P.	28
Janet W.	27
Cyd P.	12

Sunrise: February

Carol D.	19
Tina R.	1

Women of Hope February

Sandy B.	43
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Women in the Solution

January	
Stephanie R.	11
Sam S.	9
February	
Helen Y.	7
Beth H.	5
Valerie B.	4
Shannon M.	1

Please use the word **ANNIVERSARIES** in the subject line when you email entries for notice here, else they get lost amid the spam & junk

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@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.

35 Years for Friends of the Pelican Group

Friends of the Pelican group of Alcoholics Anonymous marked its 35th year in existence on Feb.26, 2015.

Friends of the Pelican Group meets at 8 p.m. on Mondays for an As Bill Sees It meeting and on Thursdays at 8 p.m. for a Big Book study. The last Thursday of the month is a celebration of home group members' anniversaries with an open speaker meeting.

This year's Anniversary event started promptly at 6 p.m. with fun and fellowship and then the minister of the host church (Roser Memorial Community Church) Doctor Bob (yes a Doctor Bob for an A.A. meeting) gave the invocation just before sitting down to a Pot Luck dinner at 7 p.m..

The next hour was a happy, joyous, and fun-filled occasion as friends, family, Al-Anon members and visitors from all around celebrated Friends of the Pelican and its 35 years of helping the suffering alcoholic achieve sobriety.

The evening concluded with the 120 persons in attendance listening to the story of the experience, strength, and hope of James H. from Tampa, FL.

Upcoming Events:

Founders Day Dinner
Date, Location TBA

Delegate's Breakfast
Date, Location TBA

Gratitude Dinner
Date, Location TBA

Central Office Open House
Dec. 5, 2015

Take a Break for Gratitude and Thanks

Every afternoon, I lay down for about 20 minutes and concentrate on mentally speaking to the God of my understanding, thanking Him for the day.

I ask for health and care for the world's situations, then our key, then our community, our family, individuals, then me.

When I get to myself I give thanks for the blessings I have received and can emotionally hook in to the knowledge that I want for nothing, all is taken care of without my asking, and all that I have room for is gratitude and expressing that gratitude.

—Margarita F.