



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.

MAY 2015

Central Office (941) 351-4818

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

That 1970 \$1 is now worth 10 cents

IS YOUR CONTRIBUTION MATCHING INFLATION?

I overheard some time ago how a treasurer for an A.A. group was talking to members of his home group and he was letting them know how difficult it was to pay the bills given that less than 100% of individuals at meetings give to the 7th Tradition collection basket and also because of the increase in prices due to inflation over the years.

He passed out a flyer (contents listed below) showing how prices have risen from 1970 (when AA had a suggested contribution limit of \$1.00 per meeting) to what they were in 2012.

Item Price in 1970 Price in 2012 % Increase over 42 years

Loaf of Bread	\$.40	\$1.89	473%
Lb. of Coffee	\$1.41	\$4.99	353%
Postage stamp	\$.08	\$.40	500%
Gallon of Gas	\$.36	\$3.11	864%
AA Mtg	\$1.00	\$\$\$??%

A.A. suggested contribution in 1970 of \$1. If you can, and are able to, now would be a good time to raise that contribution to meet growing needs. The \$1 given in 1970 has a current value of just over 10 cents.

Has your contribution kept up with inflation over time?

—Chris C., Friends of the Pelican

Sponsorship Quiz

Do you know what the acronyms

A.L.C.O.H.O.L.I.C.S. and
S.P.O.N.S.O.R stand for?

Answers on page 4.

*Don't be so heavenly perfect
that you're no earthly good.*

—Gail

MY DAILY DOUBLE

I have a daily double I use each and every day.

I seek my Higher Power; on my knees to Him I pray.

I ask for His direction as I go through the day

To guide me and protect me from my sometimes errant ways.

When the day is over and I'm ready for my bed,

I'm once again upon my knees in thanks for this day's bread.

And all the other blessings that He has sent my way,

Including my sobriety that allows me now to say,

No matter what comes down the pike, this has been a real good day

With this daily double, the odds are all my way.

What is this daily double that I keep within my sight?

It's humility in the morning and gratitude at night.

And if you are going to question if this comes from Him or not,

May I say with all respect that's due, He's the only one I sought.

(From Mike W., G.O.D. Group, Marion MA; Bay Group, Sarasota FL)

How His "Best Thinking" Got Him Drinking Again

By Marcus E.

After 11 years of what I *thought* was perfect sobriety, there came a time when I said to myself that the word *never* was no longer part of my vocabulary and *to drink alcohol* was not just an option. If you were to put the italicized words together they read, " *thought never to drink alcohol*".

Thus, my best thinking got me drinking. Seven hard years of insanity. I tried various times to get back to A.A. but the short leash alcohol had on me was cunning, baffling, and powerful. I did however, by the grace of God, finally make it back into A.A. and the spiritual journey began again. However by the time I made it back I had been stricken by a bad stroke which left me paralyzed on my right side, wheelchair bound, severe vision problems, and a speech impediment.

I heard early on in my return to recovery that the first time it is a gift, the second time you really work for it, and I did just that. I soon came to believe that the stroke was a gift from God in which He had plans for me. I could no more blame God for my disability than I could stop the sun from rising in the morning. Somehow, some way, God entered my heart and I felt blessed just being sober and alive. The gifts did not end there though as the fellowship rallied to drive me to meetings six nights a week, different members every time. Those promises we read about in the Big Book came to life on my journey one after another. A fellow member donated a lighter and newer wheelchair to me, a

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Know the Early Warning Signs

Relapse: It's an 11-Step Program

Relapse is so common in the alcohol and drug recovery process that it is estimated more than 90 percent of those trying to remain abstinent have at least one relapse before they achieve lasting sobriety.

But a relapse, sometimes called a "slip," doesn't begin when you pick up a drink or a drug. It is a slow process that begins long before you actually use.

In 1982, researchers Terence T. Gorski and Merlene Miller identified a set of warning signs or steps that typically lead up to a relapse. Over the years, additional research has confirmed that the steps described in the Gorski and Miller study are "reliable and valid" predictors of alcohol and drug relapses.

If you are trying to obtain long-term sobriety and avoid having a relapse along the way, it is important to recognize the following warning signs and take action to keep them from progressing into a full-blown relapse. Here are the first 5 of the 11 Steps to a Relapse

CHANGE IN ATTITUDE - For some reason you decide that participating in your recovery program is just not as important as it was. You may begin to return to what some call "stinking thinking" or unhealthy or addictive thinking. Basically, you are not working your program as you did previously. You feel something is wrong, but can't identify exactly what it is.

ELEVATED STRESS - An increase in stress in your life can be due to a major change in circumstances or just little things building up. Returning to the "real world" after a stint in residential treatment can present many stressful situations. Be careful if you begin to have mood swings and exaggerated positive or negative feelings.

REACTIVATION OF DENIAL - This is not denial that you have a drug or alcohol problem, it's denial that the stress is getting to you. You try to convince yourself that everything is OK, but it's not. You may be scared or worried, but you dismiss those feelings and you stop sharing those feelings with others. This is dangerous because this denial is very similar to denial of drug addiction or abuse.

RECURRENCE OF POSTACUTE WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS - Anxiety, depression, sleeplessness and memory loss can continue long after you quit drinking or doing drugs. Known as post acute withdrawal symptoms these symptoms can return during times of stress. They are dangerous because you may be tempted to self-medicate them with alcohol or drugs.

BEHAVIOR CHANGE - You may begin to change the daily routine that you developed in early sobriety that helped you replace your compulsive behaviors with healthy alternatives. You might begin to practice avoidance or become defensive in situations that call for an honest evaluation of your behavior.

(The remaining six warnings next month)

© Getty Images, Updated November 28, 2014.

**The Newsletter Depends
Upon Its Friends.**

*Write an article and send it to
newsletter@aaqrq.net. Use the
word "article" in the subject.*

Back of the Book

Student of Life

The stories in the back of the Big Book were believed by Bill Wilson to be the most important part of the tome, yet they are often overlooked. Readers are invited to supply a favorite thought or theme from a story, as Jody K has done below.

By Jody K.

"Student of Life" in the fourth edition of the *Alcoholics Anonymous* book strongly resonated with me. The author tried using willpower to beat the obsession to drink. For many years, I tried this approach, but to no avail. I always ended up drinking again.

It wasn't until I was introduced, by my mother, to a man who didn't drink. He knew early in the relationship that I was an alcoholic. When I drank, my personality changed from being lovable to a shrew. Because I had tried for so many years to stop drinking on my own, I was somewhat receptive to his suggestion to go to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting.

I discovered that these people had my disease, were happy, comfortable in their own skin, and accepted life on life's terms. The years have gone by, and a "day at a time," I have managed to not pick up a drink. Every part of the program is miraculous. It would be very difficult to adequately describe all of the tools this way of life has given me. Sobriety is glorious!

"Best Thinking" Got Him Drunk

(Continued from Page 1)

couple finished my apartment with hiring someone to supply time and material at their expense. I was overwhelmed with gratitude for the generosity all had shown me. I knew then that there is a God and I am not it. Ego deflation at its finest. Today I am swimming in gratitude.

As I shared in the beginning I thought I was doing all the right things Alcoholics Anonymous had suggested. I found a home group, I got a sponsor who took me through the 12 Steps of recovery. I did service for A.A. at the group level, then went onto the district level carrying the message through Intergroup, Central Office, and then onto General Service Board. I gave, and I gave and I gave it away so I could reap the joys of staying sober.

But I overlooked one important experience of this amazing program, (the selfish part our co-founders spoke of) thus I forgot to take care of the one individual that meant the most to my sobriety, ME. I got RID (restless, irritable, and discontent). and stepped off the spiritual path. I no longer thanked Him at night and followed the same in asking Him to keep me sober as I awoke to a new day. No longer were prayer and meditation, (11th Step) a part of my morning routine. I unplugged from God and as a result the Steps which led me to a new way of living were fading away, my defects reared their ugly heads and I picked up a drink.

That was then and this is now, a new sober day, spiritually fit to begin anew. Blessed to be back in His graces, swimming in gratitude that I once again am "part of" this fellowship. Sober for one day at a time.

A Letter to the Fellowship

It has been my experience in the last 3 months of attending District 4 meetings/committee meetings that there is not much enthusiasm in general for doing service above the very basic of what might be listed on a position's suggested duties listing for those of us in General Service.

I would like to ask all General Service Representatives (GSRs) and Alternate GSRs to do one small thing that will make a world of difference. If you are lucky enough that your home group has placed you in the position of the Trusted Servant position of GSR please consider picking among the many committees in the District 4 service structure to volunteer on. I was told by my home group when I was asked to fill my GSR duties that I should select at least one committee to work on, as traditionally all GSRs picked a committee to volunteer on and helped out on that committee for the duration of the panel that they were selected to serve. It has not been my experience that other groups told their GSRs the same thing.

I was at Central Office for the meetings of the Literature Committee and the Grapevine/ La Viña committees and for both meetings there was a total of five members present. It is a shame that people do not value the position that they have been entrusted with enough to commit a little extra to help make the A.A. fellowship work better, so I am asking that one please consider doing just a little more to make things work better.

In Love and Service
Christopher W. C.
Friends of the Pelican

‘I’m Just F.I.N.E.’

An old timer asks someone newer in the program how they are doing. The newbie says, “I am just fine, thank you!”. The old timer responds “My good friend, unless what you truly are saying is that you are Fearful, Insecure, Neurotic, and Emotional (F.I.N.E.) I would suggest you look for a different response phrase!”



‘I don’t want to quit drinking. I thought this was a secret drinking club.’

Paying Attention to People Around Her Brings Happiness

By Ilene I.

Before I got sober, living usefully meant taking care of my own needs. I had brief periods of being useful to others, but it was not anything that I aspired to do on any regular basis. After all, that would interfere with my drinking!

When I got sober, I learned that I must get out of myself and be useful to others if I want to have any lasting serenity and, with that, lasting sobriety. That means that I need to remain willing to do certain things such as go to meetings, make coffee, greet newcomers, share at meetings (and here), let that car have the parking spot I want, put my shopping cart away, call my Mom and let her talk, etc.

Here’s the humility part — I don’t come up with these ideas on my own. I learn from you and other A.A.s, my coworkers, friends and neighbors. I see my 83-year-old neighbor put colas or bottled water out for the garbage men on a weekly basis, and she mails greeting cards almost daily. What great ideas!

The more I pay attention to those around me, the more I learn how to be useful and kind to others. As a result, I am a happy and grateful girl.

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. A family member has blown a minor issue out of all proportion and has permanently ended our relationship. I am hurt, angry and confused. How do I avoid getting a resentment in these circumstances?

A. Trying to avoid GETTING resentments is a little like trying to avoid going to the bathroom – unnatural, unhealthy and doomed to fail. It’s KEEPING a resentment that’s poison for an alcoholic. Realize the offender may have some real emotional problems. Standard advice is to forgive for your own sake – often easier said than done. Personally, I have found getting over the anger allows resentment to have an escape route. Some problems don’t have solutions, so accept that possibility. “Let go and let God” is more than an A.A. saying – it’s good advice.

Q. I’ve reached middle age and am really enjoying my sobriety and freedom from destructive behavior. But it’s the “happy” part of “happy, joyous and free” that seems to have lost its zest. I don’t seem to feel the thrill from things, places and activities I had when I was younger. Any advice?

A. Congratulations – you are growing up. As emotionally healthy people mature they realize that true happiness come from helping others, not from selfish personal satisfaction. A luxury car is just a car, and trying for a lower golf handicap just gives you heartburn and robs you of the fun and companionship of the game. In the full Serenity Prayer, we ask to be “reasonably happy in this life” – a realistic goal.

Q. OK, I’ve written my 4th step inventory and since it’s the 5th month, my sponsor wants to have the 5th step “talk.” Do I have to?

A. Only if you want to stay sober and find the truth about yourself. The truth will set you free but the messenger (sponsor) might annoy you. Have courage.

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.

Bay Group

April
Dick L. 40
Steven F. 13
Don N. 11
Lisa B. 6

Bee Ridge East March

Jeanette K. 29
Mark H. 17
April
Tom M. 28

Early Bird Group

April
Jack C - 21

Early Big Book

April
Sheila D. 29
Judy M. 28
Marla H. 28
Jack R. 22
Todd P. 2
Jennifer I. 1

From the Heart

April
Linda C. 35
Judy K. 31
Marjorie B. 19
Misty J. 3

Friends of the Pelican

April
Simonne C. 48
Frank McA. 27
Devon D. 4
Joe M. 1

Gulf Gate Noon

April
Jack G. 52
Kathi B. 33
Bill C. 25
Judy K. 21

Lakewood Ranch 12&12

April:
Steve G. 3

Living Sober

January
Laurie C. 5

Monday Night Mens

April
Ed O. 36
Gary B. 26

Oasis

April
Fran M. 2
Michael P. 2

Primary Porpoise

April
Jonathan M. 28
Joan F. 9

Serenity Room

April
Trudie S. 38
Rick H. 23
Dave G. 17
Robin E. 8

Randy M. 8
Tim G. 7
Michele B. 3
Eric U. 1

Sober Living April

Kathy H. 27
Maureen C. 25
Greg C. 20

Sunrise

April
Brook J. 13
Mitch P. 9

St. Armand's Noon

April
Marcia P. 36
Cheryl S. 35
Gary B. 26
Jan S. 11
Stephen W. 7
Molly M. 4

Women In The Solution April

Linda P. 32
Rebecca P. 15
Amy H. 13
Jaynee H. 5
Cheryl M. 4
Lynn M. 1

Answers to Page 1 Quiz

A.L.C.O.H.O.L.I.C.S.=A Life Centered On Helping Others Live In Complete Sobriety
S.P.O.N.S.O.R.=Sober People Offering Suggestions On Recovery

Meeting changes

The 8 p.m. Friday meeting of the **New Freedom** group is no longer active.

The **Bee Ridge East** group which meets at St. John's Methodist Church, 6611 Proctor Rd. on Wednesdays will now begin its meetings at 7 p.m. instead of 8 p.m.

Central Office Drive Lags

The 2015 Central Office Fund drive ended in late April with a final total of a bit more than \$25,000, falling short of the target of \$30,000.

The Central Office board thanks all who contributed and worked to raise funds from their groups in support of what has been called the "best Central Office in A.A."

"More" Is Always Less

Not he who has little, but he who wishes more, is poor."

— Seneca (4 B. C. — A. D. 65)

In my recovery I must still deal with that compulsive side of my nature that always wants more.

I forget to be grateful for what I have. I ruin relationships because I have a code of behavior that I expect from others but not myself! I miss the fun of the moment because I am preoccupied with what I am missing elsewhere. I miss the comfort of my own home as I fantasize about country mansions owned by millionaires. Always I want more — and yet in my own experience more has always been less.

Today I work hard on a spiritual program of gratitude. I have a checklist of things I need to be grateful for; I work on my disease of greed by talking about it.

Thank You for that part of me that must remain "poor."
—Anonymous

Upcoming Events

- Delegate's Breakfast Saturday, May 30, 9 a.m. St. Andrews, Sarasota*
- Founders Day Dinner Saturday, June 13, Mennonite Church on Bahia Vista*
- Gratitude Dinner, Date, Location TBA*
- Central Office Open House Dec. 5*

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.