



On the web at aasrq.org

Sara-Mana Intergroup

POBox 3075 1748 Independence Blvd. #B2 Sarasota, FL 34234

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.

May 2016

Central Office (941) 351-4818

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

Meditation: Its Power and Value in Recovery

By William G.

"I think therefore I am" is how Rene Descartes famously resolved his existential crisis.

According to lore, there he sat, alone in his cold farmhouse, employing the Cartesian logic he ushered into scientific vogue, having a good old fashioned panic attack trying to prove that he actually existed.

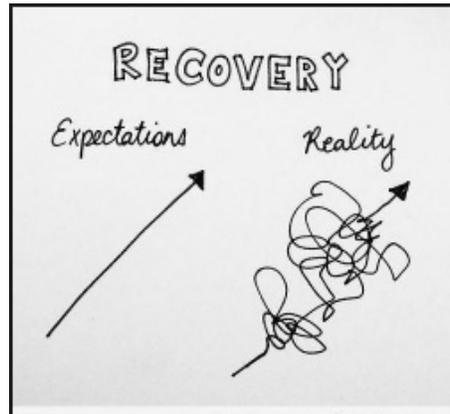
How could he be sure what was real and what was illusion?

Finally, in a flash of enlightenment Descartes intuited the "Aha!" moment that has reverberated through the ages. Since then, we in the West have rightly accorded great import to the power of thought, especially the positive "right thinking" we learn in recovery.

Then there are those, often of the alcoholic variety, prone to chronic over-thinking, such as myself. Indeed, once, when told by a sponsor that I thought too much, I actually replied "Let me think about that."

The antidote to this condition of course is the 11th step, in particular the practice of meditation which has led me to also explore the spiritual traditions of the East where I learned the story of Buddha's "Aha!" moment of enlightenment.

It is said that after 40 days of meditation, Buddha "awoke." In that moment, as he opened his eyes, he beheld the sky, the trees, the birds and the people around him and exclaimed in humbled awe *"You are, therefore I am"*. "I don't know if anyone ever has, or even can, marry these two ways of seeing the world but I do believe that it presents a worthwhile ideal in recovery - to be intuitively logical, meditatively linear and scientifically connected to life itself - A Cartesian Buddha....



New Summer Hours for Central Office

The Board of Directors of the Central Office met on April 21 and voted to change its summer hours to better accommodate visitors during the slack off-season months.

Beginning June 1 and continuing through September 30, the office will be open Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and will be closed Saturdays through Tuesdays inclusive, with a couple of exceptions.

The Office will be open on the third Saturday during our District General Service meeting and the third Tuesday from 5:00 p.m. during our Intergroup meeting.

Get This Newsletter Delivered to You by Email

Get your Sara-Mana Newsletter emailed to you as a PDF. Email edgarc@aol.com and ask to be added to the email distribution list.

The benefits include not being shut out if your meeting's supply is exhausted early, getting the issues as much as a week before they are available in print form, and saving the organization printing costs.

Late Gifts Push Fund Drive to \$30,000 Goal

By Tony F., Central Office Manager

When I walked into the office the morning of April 20, the 2016 fund drive total was \$22,000. There was an estimated \$2,000 yet to be counted and added to the total. I thought we would be making an announcement that for the first time in 10 years we didn't meet our goal—\$30,000 this year—but then I went to the mail box.

I am pleased to say that last minute gifts pushed our total to \$30,000!

Our Seventh Tradition of self-support is much more about participation than large sums of money. Once again through your participation, we are not only able to say we have the Best Central Office in South Florida but the most generous membership as well.

The Staff and Board of Directors for the Central Office of Sara Mana wish to thank each and every one of you who have contributed so generously. We are truly grateful.

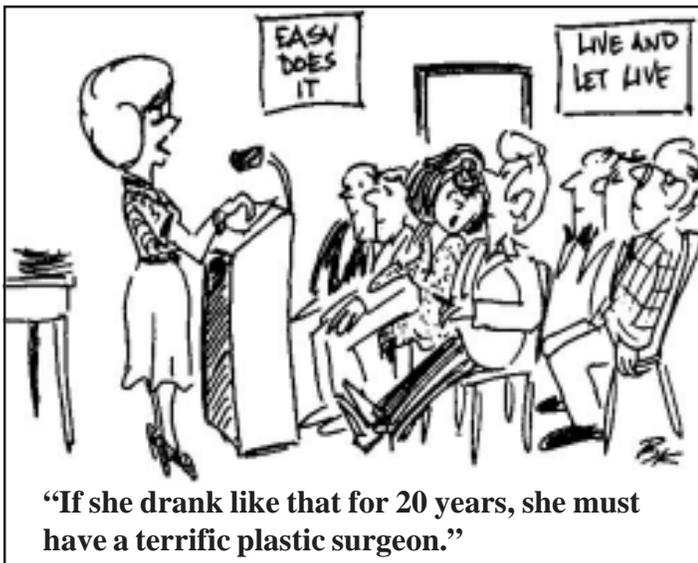
How She Achieved Emotional Sobriety

By Anne F.

Emotions...Feelings...a brand new phenomena that's taken 50 some years to experience. I've been out of sorts for a little while now and I have to admit, I don't like the feeling. Feelings are difficult for me because they're new. In the past, every time I "felt" an emotion creeping up, I'd stuff it in the closet with a few stiff drinks.

Now that I've been sober for a while, I am learning how to deal with my feelings in another way. Specifically, I have to stop running away from them. Early in sobriety, humor was a

(Continued on Page 2)



Something for Everyone

Precious Virtues We Get From A.A.

What is A.A.? It is a spirit.

It cannot be touched, nor can it be completely understood. It is as wide as the world, yet small enough to fit snugly into the mind and heart of man. It has brought light where only darkness dwelt. It has given hope to the hopeless and help to those who yearn in despair.

It has nourished forgiveness in those who knew no pity. It has given strength to the weak and humility to the strong. It has given greatness to the common. It has spurred to higher goals those who strove for nothing. It has brought to the destitute a home.

It has transformed sorrow into a weapon of happiness. It has given purpose to the trackless and shelter to the lost. It has taught patience to the hurried and action to the slothful. To youth, it has given vision. To the aged, promise. To the lonely, companions. To the restless, rest. To the sick, it has been a doctor. To the dying, it has revived the desire to live.

To those who have fallen, it has been a helping hand. It has no judgment against the unteachable, nor has it praise for those who learn. To the outcast, it has been a family. To the childless, it has given children. To the ignorant, wisdom. To the wise, tolerance.

It has given to all men that which is most precious; it has given love for the truth, with enough left over to share with each other.

This article was supplied by Betsy W.; it was originally published in The Reviver, an Australian A.A. Intergroup newsletter.

Alcohol gave me wings to fly, and then it took away the sky. — Tom S.

**Blessed are the flexible, for they won't be bent out of shape.
—The late Lloyd, via Lisa V.**

Nancy's Notes

Internalizing the Serenity Prayer

Nancy B. keeps a daily journal, and enters thoughts about the A.A. program triggered by her morning readings.

The Serenity Prayer has worked for me, over and over. And while I say it in a rather rote way in meetings I think I have internalized the concepts. It seems, over the years since I have been part of A.A., I have made a 180 degree change in acceptance and made great improvements in the wisdom area too as a result of acceptance. The change part also has been powerful, for with acceptance and the new perspectives living the 12 Steps has given me, the changes turn out to be changes in me. Prior to A.A. changing the people in my life was my focus. That never worked, but, like my drinking, I kept doing the same things expecting different outcomes. Changing me, accepting, changing me in relation to those situations that disturb me, turning it all over to my Higher Power: the easier, softer way.

Emotional Sobriety

(Continued from Page 1)

good cover for them. Avoidance was another avenue.

This time, although I am experiencing some uncomfortable emotions, I have decided to embrace them, to use them as a learning tool. For instance, I have been trying to work through guilt I have been feeling about my emotional absence as a parent. Actually, I was a pretty good parent for many years, but during the five or so active years of alcoholism and the past five years in sobriety, I have been in my own little world. It has recently come to my attention that my child is suffering with issues that I have been blind to. When my eyes were opened to his pain, I was overwhelmed with such a strong sense of worthlessness as a mother. I asked myself why I didn't see this. Well, quite simply, it's because I'm self-centered. I wallowed in the pain of this self-discovery for a few days and didn't like it a bit. I finally decided to leave the guilt behind and take action.

But, this time, instead of running from my feelings, or drowning them in alcohol, I have acknowledged them. And while the past is the past, and I did the best I could with what I had at the time, I now intend to offer love, support and guidance to my son. And I intend to talk to him about HIS feelings and emotions. And I intend to walk through HIS pain, by his side. So, the emotion I am experiencing most strongly right now is an overwhelming sense of gratitude that, because of this program, I am able to be there for someone I love, and to be there in a much better manner than I could ever have imagined in my prior years.

There are other concerns on my mind as well about possible changes in my world. In the past, change was met with fear in my mind. And, as you can know, fear isn't easy for us. This time around, though, I'm doing my best to believe that my Higher Power has my back and instead of fearing change, I will try to embrace it as well. All change comes with a certain level of discomfort. But one of the strongest lessons I've learned in sobriety is that pain and discomfort lead to growth... and I just love all the growing up I'm doing in sobriety and in AA!

Choices Program Men Planning a Cookout

The male clients of the Choices program are planning a cookout. It is tentatively planned for Sunday, June 26, from 11 to 4 at First Step, 1726 18th St., Sarasota, FL.

First plans are for burgers and hot dogs, volleyball, ping pong, live music, and many other activities. All free!!

First Step Choices is a 52-client facility under the direction of department of corrections.

Many have heard of Choices and this is an opportunity to discover first hand exactly why this facility is so successful in helping these men return to productive lives in society. Meet Nancy, Jonni and their outstanding staff.

Further details and any other questions, contact Timothy B. at 941-587-6045. He is coordinator, First Step Choices Program, Hospitals & Institutions committee, Sara-Mana District 4, Alcoholics Anonymous. Final details will be available soon.

FCYPAA Meet Here at Hyatt July 8-10

The Florida Conference Of Young People In A.A. (FCYPAA) is going to be happening July 8-10 at the Hyatt Regency in Sarasota. It's going to be a really awesome event where young people and people in general will be coming from all over the state and beyond to have a lot of fun in sobriety.

There will be speaker meetings, panels, workshops, dances, and a lot of fun and fellowship. YPAA conferences and A.A. conferences in general are a great way to have the most fun possible in sobriety and are open to all people of all ages. Age is really just an attitude after all, right?

If you're interested in going or want to help someone else go who can't afford it, information to register for the conference or to subsidize someone else for the conference is on the FCYPAA website which is www.fcypaa35.org You can register there, register someone else, and book a hotel room for the conference there. We hope to see as many people there as possible. It's going to be a blast!



Prayer for 5th Step

Various web sites offer a prayer to accompany the working of each step in our program. These are not part of the official canon of A.A. but are grounded in Big Book comments and are well-regarded by many long-time A.A. members. We print one prayer each month through the end of the year.

Fifth Step Prayer: Higher Power, Thank you for helping me complete my housecleaning. I can now look the world in the eye. I can be alone at perfect peace and ease. My fears have fallen from me. I have begun to feel your nearness. I have begun to have a spiritual experience. I feel I am on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.

Upcoming Events

- **Founders Day Dinner June 18**
- **Choices Cookout June 26**
- **FCYPAA Meet Hyatt July 8-10**
- **Florida State Convention Aug. 3-7** Innisbrook Golf and Spa
- **Gratitude Dinner TBA**
- **Central Office Open House Dec. 5**
- **New Year's Eve Dance Dec. 31**

(Information on these events will be posted on the Sara-Mana website at aasrq.org)

Dear Alkie

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

Q. I gladly became sponsor to a relative of a family friend. I put everything into the sponsorship and "Heather" seemed to be making good progress for almost a year. Then she went to a wedding, "went out" and now won't return my calls. I feel crushed – what to do?

A. Be humble - you're responsible for the effort and God is responsible for the outcome. We all occasionally forget we are powerless over people, places and things. Don't beat yourself up and remember you stayed sober while being an example. Be welcoming to Heather if she calls – you've planted the seed and probably screwed up her joy of drinking.

Q. I'm not convinced A.A. is the only way to deal with excessive drinking. I've researched different drug and behavior modification therapies and don't believe alcoholism is a fatal, progressive disease.

A. Well, all alcoholics eventually stop drinking – however, it's best to be alive when that happens. We believe our past without A.A. is our future without A.A., only worse. If you can afford the money and time for a "resort" style rehab, good luck. BTW, we like to say we came for our drinking but stayed for our thinking – i.e. not just abstinence but learning to live happy, joyous and free.

Q. I'm open and honest about my feelings in meetings, so why do I have to confess my wrongs to another person according to step 5?

A. We have lived in isolation, prizing self-sufficiency and being in control. Confession is the price of rejoining humanity with all its flaws. It's an admission that we can't survive this disease by doing it alone. We need to receive and give encouragement and affection to others if we are to be truly alive.

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	Sunrise
April	Tony J. 36	April
Dick L. 41	Bob C. 30	Brook J. 14
Steven F. 14	Bob McC. 28	Mitch P. 10
Don N. 12	Steve G. 4	Paul S. 7
Lisa B. 7		
Michelle M. 1		
Friends of the Pelican	Monday Nite Men's	Third Legacy Men's
April	March	April
Simone C. 49	John T. 2	Dave G. 18
Frank Mc. 28	April	Dan D. 13
Rose K. 7	Gary B. 27	Julian M. 8
Joe M. 2		Curt R. 1
Gulf Gate Noon	Pass-It-On	Wed Women's Mtg
April	March	(HOLMES BEACH)
Jack G. 53	Don B. 33	April
Kathi B. 34	Viola 10	Elaine G. 38
Judy K. 22	John 8	Donna W. 1
Chris 16	Chris C. 3	Diane K. 1
Jim 11	April	
Damon S. 3	Tony C. 31	
	Jo B. 30	
	Catherine 5	
	Donna W. 1	
Happy Cookie Hour	Serenity Room	
March	April	
Joni M. 13	Trudie 39	
Bill S. 3	Rick H. 24	
Kelly B. 2	Dave G. 18	
Marilyn M. 2	Randy M. 9	
Lisa E. 1	Michele B. 4	
	Jerry B. 2	
	Nivy 2	
Lakewood Ranch 12&12		

"Without difficulties, life would be like a stream without rocks and curves – about as interesting as concrete. Without problems, there can be no personal growth, no group achievement, no progress of humanity. But what matters about problems is what one does with them."

—Benjamin Hoff,
The Te of Piglet



The Sara Mana A.A. Helpline



April Monthly Stats

AA Meeting Time/Location	278
AA Meeting in Lieu of 12 Step Call	14
Actual 12 Step Call	6
AI-Anon	4
Special Needs	9
Miscellaneous	20
TOTAL CALLS	331

*The Helpline is looking to fill the following shifts:
Tuesday, 9-Noon, Noon – 3pm
Friday, 3-6pm, Saturday, Noon - 3*

CROSSWORD FUN!

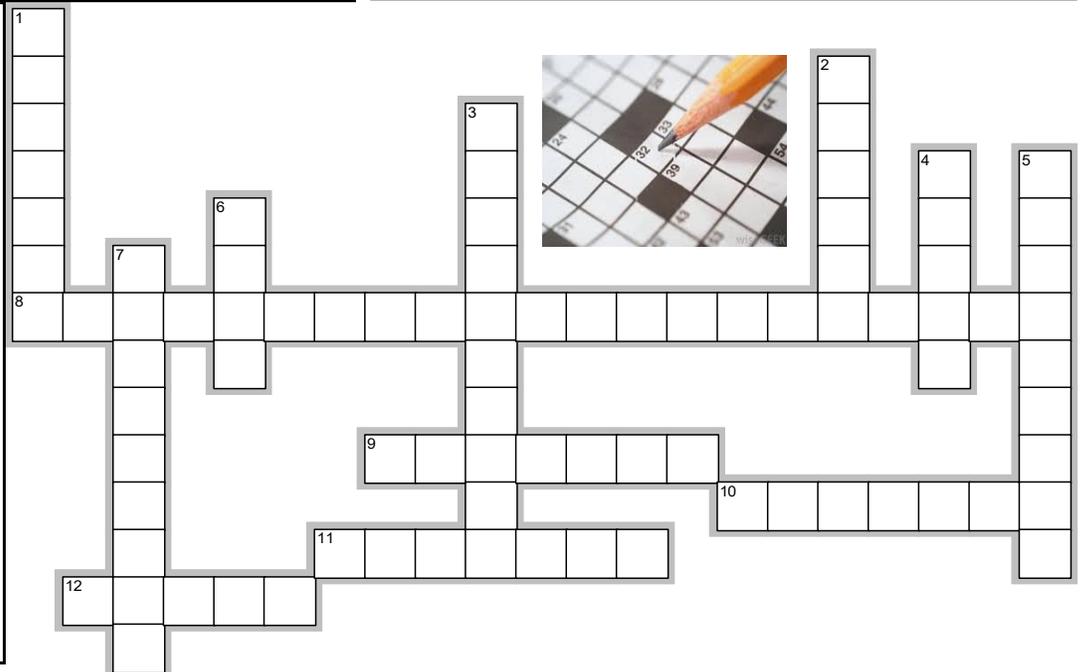
Solve the phrases or clues below, to complete the crossword puzzle.

DOWN

- Character _____
- Serenity _____
- Attitude _____
- Spiritual _____
- Taking _____
- God's _____
- Tradition 12

ACROSS

- Tradition 5
- Anonymity
- Mentor
- Conscious _____
- Twelve _____



The 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.