



Sara-Mana Intergroup

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

On the web at aasrq.org

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.

June 2013

Central Office (941-351-4818)

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

Sharing Your Experience

When we share our worldly goods with those in need, we are at least near the threshold of brotherhood. When we do so without thought of reward, perhaps we are on that threshold. But when we give of ourselves, we take at least a small step inside.

In our fellowship, the word love comes into the picture when we speak of our mission to others who want and need our help. When you give love you give your life. Experience is part of your life and in truth we must really share our experience honestly and generously if our society is to be the temple of brotherly love we would like to think it is.

We say that we are a fellowship of men and women, "who share their experience, strength and hope with each other" that we may solve our common problem. Do we really contribute our all-out maximum in that direction? In our early days, most of us soak up more love and understanding than we knew existed. In our later early days we are (most of us) so full of gratitude that we pass this on to others unstintingly and enthusiastically, enjoying the great thrill of giving as we never did before. In all honesty, do we not then taper off?

In those early days the experience of a dark harrowing slavery is fresh in our minds. We tell it all and it helps countless others. As we grow older in sobriety, is there not a tendency to pass over the dark days rather lightly? At best we pick and choose a few highlights of our drinking experience which we feel should be enough.

(Concluded on page 3, 2d column)

An Effective A.A. Group Inventory

What is a Group Inventory? "The AA Group" pamphlet on page 13 defines Group Inventories as: *...meetings at which members work toward understanding how well the group is fulfilling its primary purpose.*

That may lead us to wonder what is a group's primary purpose? We can't fulfill it unless we know what it is.

A. A. Love Shown to this Alcoholic

Just before my 15th A.A. birthday, my 39-year-old husband was killed in a boating accident, leaving me and our two children to cope with this sudden, violent loss. That night, my sponsor from California and my friends from Virginia where I got sober, started to fly in to Florida to help us through the grief. I was surrounded by loving supportive people from the program, some who I didn't really know prior to this. I was taken to meetings and encouraged to share, and the group cried with me and encouraged me to keep coming. People called just to say hi and give me a chance to talk, others dropped by to visit or invited me to coffee. When I needed to shut down both my business and his, the men in the program showed up, packed me up and moved everything quickly and quietly. All I had to do was express a need and A.A. showed up en masse to meet it! This went on for several months until I became stronger and people could see I was coping well.

In the ensuing 17 years, I've told this story of unconditional love and support, and three things became very clear to me: 1) When I don't have the strength to go on, my fellowship will carry me. 2) Recovering from grief is just like recovering (Concluded on page 2, below You Need to Know)

Tradition Five (Long Form) provides us with the answer: *Each Alcoholic Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose – that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.*

"The A.A. Group" pamphlet reminds us that the group's primary purpose is to *help alcoholics recover through A.A.'s suggested Twelve Steps of recovery.*

Taking each of these precepts into account, the Group Inventory, then, is a meeting at which members work toward understanding how well the group is carrying its message of A.A.'s suggested Twelve Steps to help alcoholics recover.

Why do a Group Inventory?

Group members may believe that they are doing a good job of fulfilling the group's primary purpose and therefore see no need for a group inventory. However, let's take a look at some of Bill W.'s letters to the A.A. Grapevine, written well after A.A. had matured by taking responsibility for itself through the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Language of the Heart, page 322 (1960):

"Let us continue to take our inventory as a Fellowship, searching out our flaws and confessing them freely. Let us devote ourselves to the repair of all faulty relations that may exist, whether within or without.

And above all, let us remember

(continued on page 3, column 1)

Oh, the benefit of sharing meetings

I couldn't count the number of A.A. shares I have heard over the years, either live at meetings or on tapes. Sometimes the talk is less than inspiring, but in general speaker meetings have been a tremendous help to me. They have inspired me to work the program, gain new insights, and made me laugh.

Many of the memorable shares were conversations between the speakers and their sponsors. I have often heard these conversations as if I were speaking with my own sponsor and getting valuable advice or clarifications.

Cliff R. pointed out to his sponsor how "sensitive" he was, that this was the source of many of his conflicts, etc. The sponsor replied, "Cliff, you are not *sensitive*. You are an immature son of a b...." Cliff's talks are hilarious, and this got a big laugh, but it made a real impact on me. I began to see my own tendency to give my character defects an appealing label that lets me look upon them as assets.

Terms like "people pleaser" started to seem a bit too gentle to me. The term "people pleaser" connotes genuine concern for others. I was really so desperate for you to like me that I was willing to lie to you or betray my own standards to make it happen.

Another great moment was when Jon A. shared his sponsor's advice on the amends process: "The reason you feel so guilty is because you're guilty." It can sometimes be too easy to think that the only harm I did was to myself. The real problem with guilt, the thinking ran, was that it lowered your self-esteem. To be able to move forward with the program, I needed to accept that my behavior had been harmful and that I wasn't the only person I had harmed.

Perhaps one of the reasons why I have been able to get a lot out of listening to speakers is that sometimes it seems easier to take advice when it isn't directed at me.

A thought to consider: "A recovering alcoholic without a sponsor is like a ship without a rudder."

YOU need to know this

THE CENTRAL OFFICE BROWN BAG is a new Wednesday closed discussion meeting, starting July 3, at noon, at the Central Office, 1748 Independence Blvd., Ste. B-2.

ORIENTATION for all new and current GSRs, DCMs welcome! Saturday, **June 29th, 9:30 to 11 a.m.**, Central Office - enter at the back door. Light breakfast, coffee, juice and water served. For Info contact Patty F. 941-993-8769.

The **THIRD LEGACY**, a new men's closed literature group, meets at 7 p.m. on Tuesdays at Trinity Church, 7225 Lockwood Ridge Road.

The **SATURDAY NIGHT SPEAKERS GROUP** was inadvertently left out of the new Where and When. The group continues to meet at 7:30 p.m. at Faith Church, 1201 North Beneva @ 12th Street.

Moves: The 10 a.m. **DONUT HOUR** AND 12 noon **LUNCH BUNCH** meetings have moved to Church of the Cross, 3005 South Tuttle and **SRQ YOUNG PEOPLE** now meets at Concordia Lutheran Church, 2185 Wood Street.

NEW: GRATITUDE SPEAKER is a new meeting at 8 p.m. on Wednesday at the Gratitude Club. **DRUNK SQUAD**, a new meeting at 8:30 p.m. Saturday at Siesta Key Chapel. **NEW BIG BOOK** is a new meeting at 8 a.m. on Tuesday at Pine Shores Presbyterian Church, 6116 Crestwood in Sarasota.

FRIDAY NIGHT LITERATURE GROUP meets at 6:30 p.m. at Northminster Presbyterian Church, 3131 61st St, Sarasota. We welcome all. We read all A.A approved literature.

WOMEN, MORE WOMEN, STILL MORE WOMEN AND EARLY RISING WOMEN NEEDED!! H & I committee's pressing needs are: (1) for 7:30 a.m. recovery pod meetings in Sarasota jail, (2) 2 p.m. Saturday/Sunday meetings in Manatee jail, (3) meetings in the Mothers & Infants unit at First Step, (4) for evening meetings at The Bradenton Bridge Work Release Center. If you are a woman interested in carrying the message of to women who cannot freely get out to meetings, please consider the above. Contact: hni@aasrq.org or 444-9698.



(A.A. Love, from page 1)
from alcoholism; it's a process and I have to keep moving through the process even when it's painful and I just don't even want to continue because at some point it does get easier to bear. 3) No one ever has to pick up a drink for any reason unless they choose to; help is always available, but I do have to ask

for it.

I've been able to take this tragedy and my recovery from it and turn it into experience, strength and hope for others suffering loss in the program. Doing this has given positive meaning to a very dark time in my life. It's how our program works!

(Thanks to Linda Ann R. for this meaningful message).

3 for June

Step 6

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Tradition 6

An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, prop-

erty, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

Concept 6

The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.

(An Effective A.A. Group Inventory, concluded from page 1)

that great legion who still suffer from alcoholism and who are still without hope. Let us, at any cost or sacrifice, so improve our communication with all these that they may find what we have found – a new life of freedom under God.”

Do we really want to take a chance that our group is perfectly fulfilling that primary purpose? Do we really want to hold on to that pride that tells us that our group has no faults and therefore we have no need to look at our group’s behaviors? Do we want to take a chance that we are not communicating with those alcoholics who are still without hope and thereby failing to help them find freedom?

The Language of the Heart, page 347 (1963):

“Let us always remember that any society of men and women that cannot freely correct its own faults must surely fall into decay if not into collapse. Such is the universal penalty for the failure to go on growing. Just as each A.A. must continue to take his moral inventory and act upon it, so must our whole Society do if we are to survive and if we are to serve usefully and well. –Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age”

If our whole Society needs to continue growing, and the Group is the foundation of our whole Society, doesn’t it follow that the Group needs to continue growing in order to survive?

How to conduct an effective Group Inventory

There are easily three possible sources of questions to use when conducting a group inventory.

“The A.A. Group” pamphlet explains that some groups take inventory by examining our Twelve Traditions, one at a time, to determine how well they are living up to these Principles. It also provides a list of questions, compiled from A.A. shared experience that can be useful in arriving at an informed group conscience.

The second and final installment of this presentation, given by Kathy G. at a Southeast Regional Forum, will appear in the July issue of the Sarmana Newsletter.

(Sharing Your Experience, concluded from page 1)

In the early days the freshness of our early sobriety lends itself to eloquent expression. Also the sharp comparison between our suffering and our recovery lends a certain potency to what we do and say. Overnight literally we have moved from the role of unwanted sufferer to a participant in the freest flowing stream of mutual help and love that exists in our world today. Then do we slide on to the shelf of easy acceptance or even complacency?

This writer doesn’t know, but that sometimes seems to be the way of things. It seems to be the pattern for old timers who say they don’t get much out of meetings anymore. The obvious answer is that tapering off in giving means dissipation of receiving. Remember your greatest help to another is your own example. Remember that sharing your experience is sharing part of yourself. It should be done honestly, wholeheartedly, and without thought of reward. That, very simply, is love.

But the main point intended is an uncomfortable and persistent feeling of guilt, that as the years go by we become careless and even miserly in sharing our experience. Perhaps we forget but more probably we forget to remember. If our gratitude is sincere, the sharing of our total experience is a sacred debt that we owe to every living being who suffers today as we did yesterday.

**CENTRAL OFFICE
CLEARANCE
SALE!!!
ALL NON AA MA-
TERIAL SOLD @
COST WHILE
SUPPLIES LAST**

Dear Alkie

- ◆ **Dear Alkie:** Do I really need a sponsor?

Alkie: Sponsorship is part of the “we” of the program. If you don’t have one, you’re not taking full advantage of the program, and you’ll probably have difficulty putting the program into practice. You’re merely auditing the course.

- ◆ **Dear Alkie:** You seem to have real quality sobriety, to be really happy and at peace. How did you do that?

Alkie: The quality of my sobriety improved proportionately to the number of meetings I attended and the amount of attention I paid to the program.

- ◆ **Dear Alkie:** My thoughts and ideas keep getting into trouble. Any suggestions?

Alkie: Your mind is not your friend, so run your ideas by one who is--your sponsor!!

- ◆ **Dear Alkie:** I want what you have. Any advice?

Alkie: The “Haves” and “Have Nots” are often the same as the “Dids” and “Did Nots” when it comes to the Steps

- ◆ **Dear Alkie:** I’m not drinking now, so why should I do the steps?

Alkie: Abstinence produces immediate physical gratification; sobriety produces eventual emotional gratification; and the Steps produce the wondrous spiritual gratification that is recovery.

- ◆ **Dear Alkie:** I’m still working, so I can’t be an alcoholic--right??

Alkie: If drinking is interfering with your work, you’re probably a heavy drinker; if work is interfering with your drinking, you are definitely an alcoholic

- ◆ **Dear Alkie:** Do sponsors have responsibilities to those newcomers they sponsor?

Alkie: The responsibility of a sponsor is to keep newcomers sober long enough to bring God to them.

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. May anniversaries appear in June.

63RD AVENUE

May
Louis 19 years
Bill R. 2 years

ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

May
Christine M. 26 years
J. Michel C. 15 years
Jim T. 13 years

BAY

May
Gerry O. 38 years
Jon Paul L. 26 years
Deb H. 24 years
Amoret T. 22 years
Kathy H. 14 years
Jim S. 3 years
Colleen O. 2 years
Kathy F. 2 years

BEE RIDGE EAST

May
Maureen S. 11 years

DONUT HOUR

May
Rick S. 28 years
Jon M. 24 years
Alan 21 years
Jack 20 years
Bruce 3 years
Donna A. 3 years
Marie W. 3 years
Eric D. 1 year
Jackie R. 1 year
Joanne L. 1 year

EARLY BIG BOOK

May
Arlene 38 years
Jon Paul 26 years
Jane S. 24 years
Carol C. 23 years
Jeff L. 15 years
Amy 1 year
Sean 1 year

EARLY BIRD

May
Gaston S. 37 years
Mike H. 15 years
Vickie B. 3 years

FRESH START

May
Tom M. 33 years
Marie P. 25 years
Eileen M. 24 years

Scott P. 4 years
Vicki Y. 4 years
Bill K. 2 years
Darlene A. 1 year
Joanie P. 1 year

FRIENDS OF THE PELICAN

May
Jeremiah V. 22 years
Suzette S. 16 years
Kip C. 7 years
Dick E. 5 years
Jim S. 3 years

FROM THE HEART

April
Judy K. 29 years
Marjorie B. 17 years
May
Chrisjean T. 4 years
Kathy D. 2 years

GULF GATE NOON

May
Marilu 21 years
Judy J. 9 years
Susan M. 4 years
Charlotte L. 1 year

HAPPY COOKIE HOUR

May
Mike Mc. 33 years
Steve 12 years
Rene 8 years
Chuck 5 years
Mary Mc. 5 years
Camilla 2 years
Carla Y. 1 year
Kelly Z. 1 year
Mike H. 1 year
Tommy 1 year
Tommy R. 1 year

LAKEWOOD RANCH 12 & 12

May
Jack M. 28 years
Jean B. 6 years
Jane C. 4 years

LUNCH BUNCH

May
Norm 56 years
Ray 27 years
Maureen 9 years
Jack S. 4 years
Amy 1 year
Kate L. 1 year
Libby 1 year
Shane H. 1 year

MONDAY NIGHT N. RIVER

April
Doug S. 18 years
May
Gail T. 29 years
Barry H. 4 years

NEW WOMEN

May
Peg G. 28 years
Liz F. 16 years
Barbara M. 15 years
Karen K. 2 years
Kathy D. 2 years

REMEMBER WHEN

May
Lou P. 35 years
Annie D. 9 years
Bill R. 8 years
Margo S. 5 years

SERENITY

April
Trudie S. 36 years
Rick H. 21 years
Dave G. 15 years
Robin E. 6 years
Michele B. 1 year
May
Mel W. 34 years
Frank P. 17 years
Sara B. 9 years
Vegas Bobby 4 years

SINGLENESS OF PURPOSE

May
Robert W. 22 years
John B. 10 years
June T. 10 years
Sara K. 8 years
David P. 2 years

SOBER LIVING

April
Kathy H. 25 years
Greg C. 18 years
May
Jane S. 24 years
Joan B.E. 9 years
Lew B. 7 years
Katie B. 5 years
Fred N. 3 years

ST. ARMAND'S

January
Ellen J. 24 years
Francoise 15 years
Stephanie R. 9 years

Brenda B. 3 years
Mary Beth C. 3 years
Janet W. 2 years
Mike C. 1 year

February

John P. 26 years
Janet W. 25 years
Cyd P. 10 years

March

Bert C. 46 years
Jane D. 45 years
B.J. 24 years
Janet B. 14 years
David D. 11 years
Salena W. 6 years
Theresa C. 5 years
Nora 1 year
Lydia B. 1 year

April

Cheryl S. 33 years

HELPLINE TOTALS MAY 2013

Call count344

BREAKDOWN:

Meeting time/location .203

In lieu of 12 step call11

Actual 12 step calls14

AI-Anon Call17

Special Needs3

Miscellaneous96

Spanish Helpline

In lieu of 12 step call2

Actual 12 step calls4

TOTAL6

Please contact Robert Q. at (941) 351-4818 or asrq.org to be a Helpline volunteer. The current available shift is on Wednesday, 3-6 p.m.

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 will 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.