



On the web at aasrq.org

Sara-Mana Intergroup

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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.

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Central Office (941)-351-4818

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

She Stopped Being a Crash Test Dummy

By Lisa M

As a 15-year-old, I had a friend whose father owned a Volkswagen dealership and I could always talk him into letting me drive his Volkswagens when we were drunk together, drinking quarts of Schlitz and driving the backroads outside of Burlington, VT. I was a year short of a permit, and he was 17, approaching his senior year of high school. I had the usual excuses, "No one will know. Nothing will happen, we won't get caught and I have no one to teach me."

He would hand the keys over to me which promptly led me to banging into a concrete post in a parking lot, or a tree by the roadside. We were very drunk after all.

That was the beginning of alcoholic driving for me. I spent

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The "Gallery," as Lois Wilson called it, is her gift to you. She knew that people would want to visit long after she had passed, and she dedicated the last years of her life to developing this museum-like display at SteppingStones, the Wilsons' retirement home in Katonah, NY. The Gallery illustrates the history of AA and Al-Anon, as well as the Wilsons' personal lives. Support from donors has maintained the house and Gallery intact as Lois left it. More information can be found at SteppingStones.org.

He's Heading for a Meeting, Just in Case . . .

By Tom A

I haven't been to a meeting in three days and I feel great.

And I haven't seen a human being in person in three days and I feel great.

And there isn't any booze in the

A.A Population

As of Jan. 1, 2014, the New York office of A.A. estimated:

	Groups	Members
United States	59,565	1,295,037
Canada	5,129	93,565
Correctional	1,487	35,799
Rest of World	49,177	713,020
TOTALS	115,348	2,137,421

Source GSO-NY pamphlet SM F-53

house, so I can't say that I've "heard voices" of the stuff talking to me, but I know that at some point, some time soon, one of my thoughts from my alcoholic brain will be, "It's been a while.. You can have a beer or two today..."

When that voice shows up (not "IF" it shows; it is guaranteed to be "WHEN ..."), if I've been to a meeting that day, I'll likely laugh at it.

If I haven't been to a meeting, the conversation might last a little longer and the only thing between me and the drink will be HP and my willingness to remember the truth about who I am.

So.. maybe I'll head out to a meeting this afternoon. Y'know, just in case...

Delegate Reports at Breakfast Meeting

A report on the actions taken at the 64th General Service Conference was given by our Area 13 delegate, Donald F, at St. Andrews Church community room on Saturday, May 31. Highlights:

- 2013 sales (primarily publications) were \$12.6 million and contributions were \$6.9 million.

- A new pamphlet on spirituality was approved as were changes to the Circles of Love pamphlet and update of the "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell" video.

One of the 70 in attendance praised Donald F for his enthusiasm, humor, broad range of information, and clarity of presentation.

Loses Wife to Cancer

How A.A. Kindness, Support Helped

By Bob L

When my wife was diagnosed with fourth stage cancer of the brain, liver, lymph nodes, lungs and bone, she had no real symptoms. 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 eyeglasses and the shoulder pain resulted from going to the gym five 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. A few days later 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 eight weeks after the diagnosis.

I have been around A.A. 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. We dated in high school and were especially close. She was a tried and true Al Anon, as was I for the past several years.

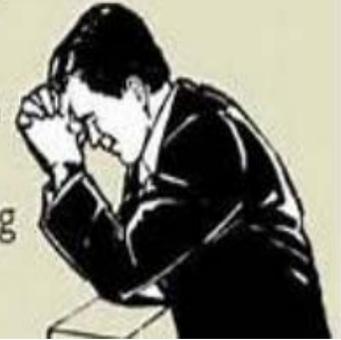
After her passing I was lost. I was sad, upset, lonely and confused. My children and grandchildren were equally torn and life became more of a chore than an adventure. There were many times when around the house I would have an overwhelming urge to get the hell out of there, and thank God I had A.A. 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 months I averaged 3 meetings a day, and now, many months later, I still average 2 a day.

Everyone has been 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 most every day. The other I have known briefly but he has been most 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 A.A. and Al Anon and for all the wonderful members and for their support and love. I am blessed to have such good friends.

To the newcomer: Welcome to Plan B. If Plan A had worked, none of us would be here.

Please God cure my hangover and I promise I will never drink again, also please forgive me in advance for lying about never drinking again.



Crash Test Dummy

(Continued from Page 1)

the next 12 years, a menace to society on the highways and byways of upstate New York, Indiana, California, Wyoming or wherever my geographic cures would take me.

I found that when I drank alcohol, no matter how much or what form -- be it beer, Boone Farm wine, gin, vodka, or even schnaaps -- I would drive drunk. Not only would I drive drunk, but if people took my keys away from me because of my inebriation, I would become combative, argumentative, seductive, or whatever it took to get the keys back. In my deranged alcohol-soaked brain, I BELIEVED that I could drive better drunk. Truly.

Some 17 accidents later, including one on a moped in Hawaii when I hit a lava wall head on, flew into the air and landed on my head, I had no more insight than when I began driving my friend's Volkswagens at 15. Yet, I never had a D.U.I. A blackout drinker from the start, there was never a time I was capable of any insight into this insane behavior.

The only thing that stopped me from drunk driving was being told I was near death and needed to go to A.A. Since my first meeting in 1983, I have never drunk again.

I cannot tell you this is due to any virtue on my part. It is not due to intelligence, reflection, epiphanies, or any other such phenomenon. When I drink alcohol in any form, I will drive drunk. That simple.

I no longer drive drunk due to the miracle of Alcoholics Anonymous meetings where I listened to what happened to people driving drunk. I've met drivers who have killed people including their own children on the roads while driving drunk.

It is in A.A. where I heard how the grace of God spared me from jail, infirmity, or even death by drunk driving. Everyone's stories are the YETS (YOU ARE ELIGIBLE TOO!!!) that I was spared. Because of regular A.A. attendance, I have not felt compelled to "test drink" and become a crash test dummy again.

Beyond the shadow of a doubt, I cannot drink any form of alcohol in safety. I would never want to meet me, driving drunk, on the highway.

OTHER Promises Found in Big Book

By Patricia M

“The Promises” taken from the Step 9 discussion in the Big book are read at the start of many AA meetings.

Many other promises about the benefits of A.A. are scattered throughout the Big Book, including the following taken from discussion of Step 10 on pages 84 through 86

- And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone-- even alcohol.
- For by this time sanity will have returned.
- We will seldom be interested in liquor.
- If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame.
- We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically.
- We will see that our new attitude toward liquor has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it.
- We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation.
- We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us.
- We are neither cocky nor are we afraid.

Get Newsletter by Email

Get your Sara-Mana Newsletter emailed to you in a PDF format each month. Email secretary@aa.org and ask to be on the email list.

HELPLINE TOTALS



May 2014 Calls	389
BREAKDOWN	
Meeting time/location	279
In lieu of 12 step call	14
Actual 12 step calls	13
Al-Anon Calls	9
Special Needs	0
Miscellaneous	74
Xpanish Helpline	3

PEOPLE WHO DON'T GO TO MEETINGS NEVER HEAR WHAT HAPPENS TO PEOPLE WHO DON'T GO TO MEETINGS.

3 FOR JUNE

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

Steps 6 and 7 could easily be written as one: “Were entirely ready and have asked God to remove these shortcomings.” Why an entire step on getting ready? Because I have to be serious about changing. If I “humbly ask him” without being entirely ready then I’m off the hook. “I’m trying to change but God is falling down on the job.” Step 6 says to me: not my usual insincere phoniness; am I really ready to stop being the person I have become? God will remove my toxic traits, but only if I am sincere in desiring their removal.

“Defects of character” ouch! Not “character traits” but “defects of character.” Some definitions of “defect” are “a lack of something necessary for completeness or adequacy”; “something that causes weakness or failure”; “an imperfection that impairs worth”. Whew! (Comment on the step by Anonymous)

TRADITION SIX: An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

CONCEPT SIX: 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.

Dear Alkie

Dear Alkie: Should a newcomer go to the same meetings as his or her sponsor?

Alkie: If your schedules permit, it’s a very good idea. First of all, your sponsor can introduce you to the people in the group. This will make you feel like a part of the group quicker, which is very important. Also, if you’re at the same meeting, you can ask your sponsor about the things you didn’t understand right after the meeting. Why not meet your sponsor before or after the meeting for coffee or a meal. Try to do this once a week or so. You’ll be surprised at how much that will help you, especially if you’ve started to work the steps together.

Dear Alkie: I’ve been sober for four years but I hate going to meetings. Can I stay sober if I replace A.A. meetings with church involvement?

Alkie: The simple answer to that is NO! You will become “dry” instead of sober. I’ll explain that in next month’s column, so stay tuned. A.A. offers you a program specifically designed for the disease of alcoholism. Church does not. You have me wondering why you “hate” meetings. Whether you realize it or not, you’re probably not working your program the way it’s suggested. I’ve been sober a long time and I love meetings. I look forward to them every day and so do the people I know who have even more time than I do. Maybe that’s why we all have a lot of time. In fact, I get depressed if I start to miss meetings. And my friends all say they do too.

I believe alcoholism is the best disease to have. Not only do we get better but we actually become happy and serene in time. What other disease can promise you that?

The Steps are only a theory until they are put into practice. The only way to do them wrong is to not do 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. February anniversaries appear in March.

63rd Avenue

May
Louie 20 years

Attitude Adjustment

May
Christine M 27
J-Michael C 16
Jim T 14

Bee Ridge East

May
Maureen S 12

Early Bird

May
Gaston S 38
Mike H 16
Scotty P 5
Vickie B 4

From the Heart

May
Linda Z 34
Chrisjean T 5
Kathy D 3
Joan L 2
Elisha 1

Gulf Gate Noon

May
Jerry G 37 years
Richie 25
Marilu 22
Suzanne M 17
Judy J 10
Susan M 5
Charlotte 2

Happy Cookie Hour.

May
Mike McB 34
Ray B. 29
Steve M 13
Rene P. 9
Chuck 6
Tommy R. 2
Carla 2
Nikki M. 1

Lakewood Ranch 12 & 12

May
Jack M 29 years
Jean B 7
Jane C 5

Kensington Park

Mike B 20 years
Kim R 3
Hank R 3

Monday Night Men's

May
Tom S 23
Lee N 21
Jason P 1
Ryan 1

North River Home

May
Gail T 30
Barry H 5

Saturday Night Speakers

May
C Jay P 2

Serenity Room

May
Mel W 35

Sober Living

May
Marguerite S 18
Lew B 8
Fred N 4

St Armands

May
Lisa G 30
Arthur 26
Cookie P 24
Anna 19

Sunrise Group

May
Christopher B 31
Bob N 1
Paul H 1

Events Calendar

District-wide social gatherings of Sara-Mana District 4 for the rest of the year are:

GRATITUDE DINNER:
Nov. 15 Mennonite Church, Bahia Vista, Sarasota

OPEN HOUSE AT CENTRAL OFFICE: Dec. 6

NEW YEAR'S EVE DANCE.
Location to be announced.

SUPPORT NEEDED
Keep It Green Group
Saturday 5:30PM
Long Boat Key
Bayfront Park Recreation Center
4052 Gulf of Mexico Dr.
We need your support in order to continue.

No Rainy Days Group
We meet Monday thru Friday 12:10PM
Longwood Park
6050 Longwood Run
In the Pavilion next to Basketball Court
We are here but we need your help.

Where and When Changes
NEW:
Monday, 11 a.m.
One Step at a Time, (women's meeting)
1020 4th Street
West. Palmetto
(enter church from office entrance).



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 34234. Phone 941.351.4818.