



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 difference.

JUNE 2016

Central Office (941) 351-4818

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

Manatee Recovery Pod Effort Needs Help

By Bobby T.

I am the coordinator of the Men's Recovery Pod at the Manatee Correctional Center in Palmetto, Fl.

With the help of Hospitals and Institutions committee, I and other members of the A.A. community conduct 120 meetings a month at the facility. These meetings are for the men and women living in the Recovery Pods. The units are completely separate from the jail and house only those inmates who are serious about their recovery. In only a few months we have already had several success stories.

There are presently several open positions or times for these meetings. If we don't have people to chair these slots then we will lose them, thus depriving inmates of a chance to learn what Recovery is all about.

There are 30 men and 15 women in the Pods and they all attend the meetings. These meetings are important to them and they are important to us also. If you want a rewarding twelfth step call, this is a great way to accomplish it.

We need your help . We can use weekly help, monthly or even just emergency people to be able to call to fill in for a meeting or two. Will you be responsible? You could help save someone's life.

To find out more about volunteering, contact our Central Office at (941) 351-4818 and ask for contact info on the Recovery Pods.

When drinking, I never suffered blackouts because my life was just one long brown-out. —Jack B.



"It's been 800 lightyears and I really need a 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.

"If you don't have something to say, don't say it." Richie A.

How Working With a Sponsor Saved Her

From the time that I received my first communion at age seven, until I went off to Catholic school at age 13, I walked to Mass every morning.. My faith grew and deepened. Yet, there was a disconnect between my faith in God and my behavior around his children. Those pesky needy feelings kept driving me toward very unchristian behaviors.

My first sponsor in A.A. had her hands full. I told her in no uncertain terms that I had done steps 4 and 5 with my priest and we could just jump to 10. She just nodded. She invited me to take a ride with her to her plastic surgeon. Over the next few months we went on a bunch of rides together. One day I yelled at her. She fired me. I was good with that. She had no business asking all those pesky questions.

Then I had a melt down at my homegroup. I was yelling and angry and when I was done, one person said, "Alice, you need help. You need to share your feelings." She handed me a card. Another said, "You need a sponsor..how about Gert?" Both desperate and amazed that these women would still speak to me after

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Nancy's Notes

Spiritual Awakening in Action

Nancy B. keeps a daily journal, and enters thoughts about the A.A. program triggered by her morning readings. She shares those musings with us.

I considered the dramatic experience of telling my daughter that I was an alcoholic my spiritual awakening. It was my Higher Power talking through me, for sure. So I haven't expected another dramatic epiphany, white or golden lights, bells, whistles or sirens. Yet, I have gained a sense of well-being and a new sense of awareness. Turmoil is almost completely gone and when I feel upset I keep it in perspective, use my tools, and it goes away. In practical terms, my new state of consciousness is the knowledge that it is not all about me, we in A.A. and the world are truly a "we," and that when I help another I am following a Higher Power's plan and feel good about it. It may be as small as a smile or as large as a phone call to a newcomer—it helps us all.

How Finally Working With a Sponsor Saved Her

(Continued from Page 1)

my shameful behavior, I sat down and I began to listen. I asked Gert to sponsor me. She agreed.

Several days later, after a year without a sponsor, with the support of a loving and kind sponsor, I called the number on the card and asked for help. I returned for help every week for two years and in the course of that time, I did all 12 steps. I began to calm down. A miracle! Oh, I still

have that quick Irish temper but today I can keep it in check. I can still be impulsive, but today I live with an emotional budget. My feelings are still intense but today I am very grateful for them and I have learned to honor them appropriately. I remember when they were dead. I try to live in steps 10, 11 and 12 as I was taught to do. As I look back I know, that the loving support of my A.A. group saved me. It is true. Love conquers all.

11 1/2 Steps Weren't Enough to Tune Out the World

By: William G

"How on God's Green Earth" a wise sponsor once challenged me, "do you propose to work a twelve step program using only eleven and a half steps?!"

"How on God's Green Earth" I silently muttered resentfully, "am I supposed to know what the heck you're talking about?"

Since being exposed to the wonderful 11th step meetings we are privileged to have here in Sarasota, I have finally understood that he was talking about the second and oft overlooked part of the 11th step direction to both pray AND....meditate.

Previously, I had fooled myself into thinking I could get away with my "own" ideas about what constituted meditation.

A contemplative walk in the woods.

A relaxing candle lit bath.

An evening of my favorite music.

Writing, dancing, skating, painting, praying....

This same wise sponsor challenged me further: "These activities you mention, are they difficult for you?"

"Not at all. Time flies!"

"And what about meditation?"

"Ugh. Five minutes feels like an eternity of struggle."

"Exactly! Now you know the difference and why contemplation, concentration, reflection, rumination, and relaxation are not meditation."

Today, I am amazed that, with diligent practice and expert guidance, I am able to tune out the world and tune into the still quiet voice within and properly meditate for a whopping and previously unimaginable... 15 minutes.

Granted it's not much but amazingly my dancing, playing, bathing, walking, cooking and shaving - the stuff of life - have taken on a different hue as a result. As the Zen Master says "Before enlightenment - chop wood, carry water. After enlightenment - chop wood, carry water."

To be "rocketed into the 4th dimension" and live "happy, joyous and free" is what we've been promised. Clearly, in order to get to the spiritual awakening of the 12th step, we must logically pass through the work of the 11th step.

All of it....

May your journey back to "Om sweet Om" be blessed.

Summer Hours for Central Office

Central Office will change its summer hours to better accommodate visitors during the slack off-season months.

Beginning June 1 and continuing through September 30, the office is open Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and will be closed Saturdays through Tuesdays inclusive, except for monthly Intergroup and General Service meetings.

Constant Vigilance Is the Price of Sobriety

By John W.

Like a diabetic who has to check blood sugar levels at least once a day, I have to monitor my recovery every day.

My first sponsor told me that the price of sobriety is constant vigilance.

With my disease I never really know how close that next drink might be. I may not feel any direct threat on any given day, but constant vigilance is required.

Every night I review the day to check what I did to protect my sobriety. Every morning I take some time to plan what I'm going to do that day to strengthen my recovery, and then I make sure I do it.

It could be going to a meeting, talking with another alcoholic, checking in with my sponsor or just taking some time to be grateful for not having to drink anymore. Sometimes I just flip open any page in the Big Book and start reading. All of it is working the program, and is the price I pay for my recovery. It's a very small price to pay for that most valuable possession.

If I get complacent about my recovery, or begin to take it for granted, that next drink could be getting closer and closer.

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

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.

“Welcome! The war is over and you have lost.”

—A.A. meeting greeter to Jonathon when he came to his first meeting.



“Ever since that first bowl of porridge at your house, I knew I was different from other bears.”

Prayer for 6th 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.

Sixth Step Prayer: Dear God, I am ready for Your help in removing from me the defects of character which I now realize are an obstacle to my recovery. Help me to continue being honest with myself and guide me toward spiritual and mental health.

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.

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

The FCYPAA website 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!

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'm frightened and discouraged – after years of heavy drinking, I can't get beyond 30 days without relapse. Am I doomed?

A. Not necessarily - but sobriety is for those that WANT it, not those who NEED it. You are flirting with a terminal illness, so you need to be committed and serious. According to the National Institute of Health, less than 9% of chronic alcoholics seek treatment and alcoholism is the 4th leading cause of preventable death. Some tips for chronic relapsers: 1) find a group where you're comfortable, 2) latch on to temporary sponsors, 3) study the “Doctor's Opinion” and accept your allergy, 4) don't drink today and come back tomorrow. More will be revealed, only IF you can get beyond the “crawl in - feel better – go out” cycle.

Q. My sponsor is helping me start to understand my character defects and it's a real eye-opener. Do sponsors usually exaggerate for emphasis, or am I really a jerk?

A. We doubt you ARE a jerk but you probably BEHAVED like one. I suffer from the defect of misperceptions — when I was drinking, I thought everything was coming together when it was really falling apart. When I got sober, I thought everything was falling apart when it was really coming together. Keep looking for the truth.

Q. I understand the sixth step is about the “willingness” to change which seems so easy. What am I missing?

A. “Entirely” is the key – changing everything about our thinking, acting and believing requires major commitment and help from our Higher Power. Life is still going to give us challenges, fears and losses and we have to deal with reality in a new and healthy manner. The Sixth Step Prayer in the adjoining column might help you meet those challenges. If you're struggling, go back to step 3.

ANNIVERSARIES

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Bay Group | Judith J. | 12 | Third Legacy Men's |
| May | Chris S. | 12 | May |
| Gerry O. | 41 | Paula P. | 1 |
| Kathy H. | 17 | | Fred W. |
| Ann D. | 12 | Happy Hour | 32 |
| Jim S. | 6 | April | John Paul L. |
| Steve C. | 4 | Mike O. | 29 |
| Amoret T. | 3 | Linda P. | 9 |
| Debbie S. | 3 | Gordon G. | 4 |
| | | David B. | |
| Bee Ridge East | | Adrian | |
| April | | Simon | |
| Tom M. | 29 | Larry | |
| Tom S. | 7 | Sarah H. | |
| May | | Kathy S. | |
| Maureen S. | 14 | | |
| | | Lakewood Ranch | |
| Donut Hour | | 12&12 | |
| Janua ry | | May | |
| Arthur R. | 33 | Jack M. | 31 |
| Peg F. | 16 | | |
| John B. | 11 | Pass-it-On | |
| David | 5 | May | |
| Paul L. | 4 | Vinnie C. | 39 |
| February | | Marc | 20 |
| Donna F. | 13 | Doris K. | 3 |
| Buffalo Bob | 8 | Mike L. | 2 |
| John B. | 8 | Tonne | 1 |
| Karen B. | 8 | | |
| Sharon T. | 7 | Serenity Room | |
| March | | May | |
| Tracy R. | 2 | Mel W. | 37 |
| April | | Tom R. | 24 |
| Richard K. | 27 | Louie A. | 22 |
| Gary B. | 27 | Martha J. | 13 |
| Marco S. | 27 | Joanie P. | 4 |
| Mike G. | 27 | Lisa P. | 3 |
| Carolyn Y. | 15 | Noel K. | 2 |
| Joe S. | 3 | | |
| Todd P. | 3 | St. Armand | |
| May | | April | |
| Rick S. | 31 | Marcia P. | 37 |
| Amy J. | 4 | Cheryl S. | 36 |
| Asa D. | 3 | Gary B. | 27 |
| | | Jan S. | 12 |
| Early Big Book | | Stephen W. | 8 |
| April | | Molly M. | 5 |
| Sheila D. | 39 | May | |
| Marla H. | 29 | Lisa G. | 32 |
| May | | Arthur | 28 |
| Wendy H. | 29 | Cookie P. | 26 |
| | | Sunrise | |
| Friends of the | | May | |
| Pelican | | Jim F. | 52 |
| May | | Christopher B. | 33 |
| Jeremiah V. | 25 | Rusty J. | 33 |
| Marcia W. | 24 | Norm F. | 31 |
| Kip C. | 10 | Cindy M. | 27 |
| | | Frank | 1 |
| Gulf Gate Noon | | Mike P. | 1 |
| May | | Tom C. | 1 |
| Jerry G. | 39 | | |
| John A. | 37 | | |
| Suzanne R. | 19 | | |

"When we give up our images of self-importance and our ideas of what should be, we can help things become what they need to be."
—Benjamin Hoff, The Te of Piglet



upcoming EVENTS

Founders Day Dinner – June 18, 2016
Choices Cookout – June 26, 2016
FCYPAA Conference – July 8 – 10, 2016
Florida State Convention – August 3 – 7, 2016,
 Innisbrook Golf and Spa
Gratitude Dinner - TBA
Central Office Open House – December 5, 2016
New Year's Eve Dance - December 31, 2016

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

on the move

The **Keep It Green** meeting, which has met at 5:30 Saturday night at the Bayfront Recreation Center on Longboat Key, is moving to 201 Gulf of Mexico Drive, Suite 10, Longboat Key, starting next Saturday, June 18

An Opportunity for GREAT Service Work!

The Sara-Mana Helpline needs YOU, for a few short hours a week to answer the hotline!

Available shifts include:

Sat 12pm-3pm



**Please contact the Central Office:
(941) 351-4818, for more information.**

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.