



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 differ-
ence.

JULY 2014

Central Office (941) 951-4818

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

Their Marital Pact: One Slip, They Split

By Jody and Bob K.

We met on April 28, 1984, introduced by Jody's mother. This was after two marriages for each of us. At the time, Bob had 8 1/2 years of sobriety and Jody was still drinking. Bob had no idea Jody was an alcoholic until two weeks into the relationship. Then things got worse and Jody's "party manners" left her and the verbal battles started.

Not too much time went by and Bob had had it. He told Jody to sober up or that was the end of the relationship. Bob felt that he had to protect his sobriety at all costs.

Thankfully, Jody started going to AA meetings and after almost three years we got married, the first one in sobriety for both of us. It has been a dream come true, but everything depends on practicing our program and going to meetings.

When we were about to get married, we made a vow to each other that if one of us picks up a drink, the marriage is over. Sobriety has to be the first priority for each of us. We know if one of us drinks, we would lose everything anyway. As the saying



The painting, "The Man on the Bed," was created for the December 1955 issue of the *Grapevine*. It is treasured by many A.A.s as a reminder of Bill W. and Dr. Bob's Twelfth-Step visit to A.A. number three (Bill D.) and as a symbol of Twelfth Step activity.

goes, "I have another drunk in me, but not another recovery."

We both thank God for the wonderful journey we have had. We have been together for almost 30 years and just celebrated 27 years of marriage, STAYING SOBER ONE DAY AT A TIME.

Challenges and Joy of Starting an AA Group

By Anonymous

Some of us who work in the University/I-75 area felt a need for a midday meeting. We decided to start a meeting. We sent our application to General Service Office in New York and got a group number. As it turns out, that was the easy part.

Turning a group into a meeting requires a little more. Tradition 7 tells us we "ought to be fully supported by voluntary contributions" and Tradition

11 says we "should be guided by attraction rather than promotion." We provide that attraction by making the meeting available.

Our meeting place is a shelter in a public park, our coffee service is bring your own, our literature may be dog-eared but it comes from our homes. Our meetings start and end with the familiar prayers, we begin at 12:10 so

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180 Countries, 70 Translations

By Carol D

Founders Day--79 years since the beginning of our fellowship. Almost 400 of us attended the dinner on June 21 marking the anniversary. I called AA World Services in New York with two questions. The answers are powerful:

1. AA exists in more than 180 different countries around the world.
2. Our Big Book is available in 70 different translations with 17 more translations pending.

When I listened to the message from Jim in the New York office, I filled up and began to cry. I am so thankful I get a little piece of this thing. We do this together worldwide. It works. It really does.

Looking Back on Her First 4 Years

“Meeting Rooms Are My School And Life is What I Do . . .”

By “Forever Grateful”

As I contemplate my four-year AA anniversary approaching, I think back to when the editor of the “Sara/Mana” AA Newsletter asked me to write an article on my first 90 days in AA. I said, “yes,” of course, not knowing what I would say. Now, you can’t get me to be quiet about AA.

You see, I am in love with the program of AA and the people in it. I go to 5 or 6 meetings per week, talk to my sponsor regularly, read the “Big Book” and other books. I am still willing to go to any lengths to maintain my healthy spiritual status and I do take my Higher Power with me wherever I go. I pray, I help others, I laugh, I cry; all things I learned to do in the program of AA. I am a better mother, more loving, a better listener, less selfish, more humble, happy, joyous, peaceful, free.

I have learned so much—enough to know that I don’t “know it all.” AA meeting rooms are my school and life is what I do. If something doesn’t work, I change it. The AA 12 Steps have given me courage, confidence, consideration for others and the desire to always do what’s right. I know what I CAN do, yet I prefer to keep it simple and live a simple life.

I don’t worry about anything anymore. God is my director, employer, guidance counselor and controller of finances. The early “pioneer” women of AA, Marty Mann (“Women Suffer Too”) and Sylvia Kauffman (“Keys Of The Kingdom”) are my role models in AA. Sylvia’s story, Keys Of The Kingdom, mirrors my own. I often mention it when asked to speak, for “what it was like.” I owe my life to these brave women of AA’s early years and when I forget “what it was like,” I go back and read these two stories of miraculous recovery to refresh my memory. They stuck it out in the beginning years for us—to tell us their experience, strength and hope so I and others like me could stay sober 70 years later. These beautiful women went on to do some of the most important work impacting alcoholics today. I identified with Sylvia’s story, recognized myself as an alcoholic and that I identified with “you.”

As I look back to my first 90 days in AA and the subsequent four years, I am grateful for what the program of AA has given me: the woman God intended me to be all along and someone I like and admire. What a miracle this program is for me and for others. Thank you God and thank you my AA family for my new, beautiful, sober life and for keeping me sober one day at a time.

HELPLINE

JUNE TOTAL CALLS	301
Meeting time/place	219
In lieu of 12 step call	11
Actual 12 step calls	12
Al-Anon Calls	6
Special Needs	1
Miscellaneous	52
Spanish Helpline	--



Beware of EGO--Easing God Out

By Jenny T

I’m always learning something new in AA. Right now I’m becoming aware of my EGO: how easy it is for me to “Ease God Out” of my will and my life.

When I was desperate, it was a relief to surrender completely to my Higher Power and do everything AA asked of me. As I practiced the steps, the amazing promises began to fill my life. I felt “happy, joyous and free.” I was also feeling pretty self-satisfied.

I still had some problems of course, that I didn’t think should or could be given away. One of those problems was chronic pain. Chronic pain syndromes are pretty common, but in my alcoholic thinking, I was the only one who had this “horrible problem.” I continued to clutch at and worry over my pain, even after I stopped drinking and misusing my medications. I still used pain to justify a lot of selfish and self-centered behavior.

One day I was practicing my morning stretching and prayer, and *a miracle happened!* As I lifted my hands up to the sun, the arthritis pain in them disappeared! WOW! “Thank you, God” I thought, “Why don’t you take away the pain in my feet?” The answer flashed in my brain: “Because then, you would try to walk by yourself!” I suddenly realized that I was letting my pain get out of control because I was trying to control it! I had to give this up to my Higher Power, and follow His lead.

Life on life’s terms:What That Means

Until I could accept in my heart that I’m an alcoholic--that I have a spiritual malady--I didn’t have the willingness to do what it takes to live a sober life.

For me there’s a difference between sober and dry. It lies in my level of acceptance. From the deepest level I accept that I need a power greater than myself to restore me to sanity, to guide me in all areas of my life. With a profound level of acceptance I can have peace of mind knowing that things are exactly as they are meant to be, and I can live life on life’s terms, not mine.—Keith R

I got sick and tired of making the best of a bad situation. My life had become a constant bad situation.

Keep Working Step 9, Even When It's Done

By Edgar C

After I completed my 9th Step, I found I hadn't completed it at all.

Seven years after "completion," Gail and Leslie showed up at a convention. They hadn't made my 8th Step list, but should have. I did a 9th with both of them and haven't seen them or heard about them since.

Eighteen years after "completion" I was at a reunion of a newspaper where I had once been Sunday editor. A woman who worked for me back then showed up. I had wronged her by not defending her against unfair treatment by upper management. Again, I took the opportunity to make the 9th step amend.

Twenty-one years after "completion," I received an obit clipped by a friend in Arizona telling of the passing of a one-time colleague at that same newspaper. I owed him an amend also, so I wrote to his widow, making the amend to him through her. I received a gracious note back from her.

Like many other steps of the program, we probably never truly "complete" making our 9th step amends despite our best efforts. We must be ever watchful and cognizant of the step because sooner or later, someone will show up who never made our 8th step lists, but should have. We should make the 9th Step amend immediately, because, as with Gail and Leslie, we may never have the chance again.

Let Go Absolutely

From: *As Bill Sees It*

"After failure on my part to dry up any drunks, Dr. Silkworth reminded me of Professor William James's observation that truly transforming spiritual experiences are nearly always founded on calamity and collapse." Dr. Silkworth said, "Stop preaching at them, (and tell your own story, the doc might have added) and give them the hard medical facts first. This may soften them up at depth so that they will be willing to do anything to get well. Then they may accept those spiritual ideas of yours, and even a Higher Power."



3 FOR JULY

STEP SEVEN "Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings".

Step 6 & 7 are basically prepare and execute (much like 4 & 5, and 8 & 9). So why not just "Asked him....."? "Humbly" was put there for a reason, and it is the first word, the leading thought. Humility is the theme of this step. The discussion on Step Six in the 12 & 12 is a virtual essay on humility. Re-read it whenever you can. Humility has been defined as a clear recognition of what and who we are, followed by a sincere attempt to become what we could be. The most heartwarming statement I have heard in A.A. is the promise that "you can be the person that God wanted you to be all along." (*Comment by Anonymous*)

TRADITION SEVEN — Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

CONCEPT SEVEN -- The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness.

Dear Alkie

"Alkie" is a long-time member of AA. Her comments are based on her own personal strength, hope, and experience and are not reflections of any official AA position or practice.

Last month I promised you I'd discuss the difference between an alcoholic in recovery and a dry drunk. Please note: this is my opinion only. Others might see this issue differently.

An alcoholic in recovery is someone who goes to meetings often, works the steps with a sponsor (continuously, I hope), has a home group and of course doesn't drink. She or he is someone who feels more and more serene, comfortable and happier each year. This person does service in the home group, sponsors others (once she or he has at least a year sober) and in general tries to be of service to other alcoholics in or out of the rooms of AA.

A dry drunk, however, is someone who doesn't drink but at the same time doesn't work the program of AA, especially someone who doesn't go to any meetings.

Almost always, the dry drunk is depressed, full of resentments, hardly serene or happy, and whose life has not changed for the better.

I know I'm generalizing about both kinds of people, but this is what I've seen over the years. If you want to add to this, or disagree with me, please let me know.

How to Keep it Green

One of the great benefits of attending regular meetings of AA is that it helps me to remember how bad it was and what is waiting for me if I choose to pick up a drink.

I have been sober for a long time, and my disease wants me to forget that feeling of pitiable, incomprehensible demoralization that drove me to AA. When I listen to others, sharing their experience, strength and hope, I am reminded of my own earlier feelings and experiences. --Bill M

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. Do not send anniversaries for future months: i.e. February anniversaries appear in March.

Attitude Adjustment June

Joe G	31 yrs
Mark H	27
Louise C	19
Karin S	12
Matthew S	8

Bee Ridge East June

Tom H	42
Lou S	16
Delores	3

Donut Hour June

George S.	26
Patrick M.	25
Elizabeth J	7
Norman A.	5
Val F.	1

Early Bird June

Bobby K	24
Eileen P	5

Friends of Pelican May

Jeremiah V	23
Suzette S	17
Kip C.	8
Bob D	7
Jim S	4
Terry L	33
Ken M	6

Please use the word **ANNIVERSARIES** in the subject line when you email entries for notice here, else they get lost amid the spam & junk

From the Heart April

Judy K	30 yrs
Marjorie B.	18
Misty J.	2
Karen S.	1
Sheila L.	5
Mary P.	4
Donna R.	1

Gulf Gate Noon June

Joe	31
Robert	20
Matthew	8
Sian	3

Lakewood Ranch 12 & 12 June

Barry S	34
Pat	29
Kate M	24
Ron H	6
Sharon G	4
Kathy B	4
Jill P	3

Lunch Bunch April

Mary M	18
Rebecca E	3
Harry C	1

May June

Norm B	57
Amy J	1
Kate L	1
Shane H	1
Libby M	1
Bob D	40
Robery M	20
Dave C	4
Dolores J	3

Monday Night Men June

Lou S	20 yrs
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Physical Mental Spiritual:

Dodie Z	21
Galena S	7

St. Armand's June

George D	46
Melvin	33
Linda Ann R	33
Pattie M	32
Gayla S	30
Barry B	21
Linda McK	3

Serenity Group June

Rachel S	2
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Third Legacy Men's May

Tony S	7
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Sober Living June

Lydia A	1
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Sunrise May

Rusty J	31
Brook J	12
Ernie D	26
Jeff M	25
Madonna	25
Dave A	5
Chuck E	3
Cindy D	3
Debra C	1

Woman Of Hope May

Lisa J	42
Gail T	30
Marilyn C	29
Liz B	26
Mary Lou	25
Shirley S	24
Sylvie M	24
Liz F	17
Jeannie B	7
Sara K	9
Leslie	3
Sue R	2
Joan L	2
Ann B	1
Lori L	1
Cookie	6
Trish W	3
Lynn W	1

Events

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 OF- FICE: Dec. 6

NEW YEAR'S EVE DANCE.

Location to be announced.

MEETING CANCELED

Friday nite literature 6:30 group in Sarasota has been canceled

New Group

(Cont. from Page 1)

our working members can make it during their lunch hours, and we do our best to be in action five days a week.

Of course we have problems. Sometimes the park has programs for kids that require our flexibility, sometimes the raccoon tries to take our cookies and occasionally "life happens" and we miss a meeting.

The joy of an intimate meeting where we know and help each other is worth all the difficulties. It has helped our core group stay sober and we have had multiple newcomers get and stay sober as a result of this meeting taking place.

We welcome the support of those with the desire to stop drinking. So stop by and join us in carrying the message. The mid-weekday meeting need in this area is evident - your help is vital.

No Rainy Days Group - Monday through Friday - Longwood Park outdoor pavilion by the basketball court - 2 miles west of I-75-south of University - turn at Longwood Run Blvd stoplight.

Daily Reflection can help you start your day in the sunlight of the spirit!!!

Serenity Room Group
Help us while you help yourself @ 7 AM Monday Thru Friday

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.