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# Sara-Mana Intergroup

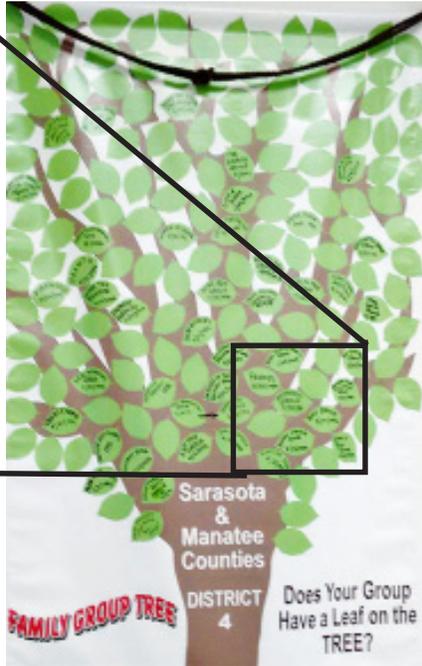
P.O. Box 3075 1748 Independence Blvd., #B2, Sarasota, FL

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 difference.

JULY 2015

Central Office (941) 351-4818

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15



## A Tree Grows in North Gate

The poster at right hangs in the meeting room at Central Office. The goal is to list all groups in District 4 with their founding dates. To find out how to make sure your group is on the tree, contact the archives committee at [archives@aasrq.org](mailto:archives@aasrq.org)

## Prayers Can Help You Work the 12 Steps

Working the 12 Steps of the program is often facilitated by the help of one's Higher Power. Following are prayers often used to work the first six steps. The last six will appear next month.

### FIRST STEP PRAYER

Dear Lord, I admit that I am powerless over my addiction. I admit that my life is unmanageable when I try to control it. Help me this day to understand the true meaning of powerlessness. Remove from me all denial of my addiction.

### SECOND STEP PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I know in my heart that only You can restore me to sanity. I humbly ask that You remove all twisted thought and addictive behavior from

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Upcoming

**Gratitude Dinner,  
Saturday, Nov. 14,  
Mennonite Church  
on Bahia Vista**



## Set an Example with a \$2 Bill

### By Anonymous

*Two Dollar Bill* is the name of a novel by Stuart Woods about a man who carries and passes out \$2 bills as an attention getter and thought provoker.

A few years back, the New York General Service Office of A.A. suggested putting two dollars into the basket due to inflation. The idea was generally ignored and today our service groups are feeling the pressure of decreased group contributions and increased A.A. community needs.

Maybe it is time for those of us who can, to rethink our own donations. Each of us who is active with service work can set an example by this simple plan:

Next time you are in your bank, buy a few \$2 bills from the teller. (You may have to ask several times.) Try placing one of the bills into the basket at a few meetings, especially your home group or one of the smaller meetings that may not collect much more than enough to pay the rent.

You may be surprised how much more impact a \$2 bill has visually over two \$1 bills! If each \$2 bill makes one more person rethink his donation, your effort will be two-fold in its value. As you may have heard: the three best ways to educate are: "example, example, and example!"

*(This article first appeared in the August 2009 issue of this newsletter, but the need is still great and the suggestion valid.)*

**I have to be aware of the two businesses in my head; one makes BS, the other buys it.**

—Lisa M.

## A Prayer for Every Step

(Continued from Page 1)

me this day. Heal my spirit and restore in me a clear mind.

### THIRD STEP PRAYER

God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love and Thy Way of Life. May I do Thy will always.

### FOURTH STEP PRAYER

Dear God, it is I who has made my life a mess. I have done it, but I cannot undo it. My mistakes are mine and I will begin a searching and fearless moral inventory. I will write down my wrongs. But I will also include that which is good. I pray for the strength to complete this task.

### FIFTH STEP PRAYER

Higher Power, my inventory has shown me who I am, yet I ask for Your help in admitting my wrongs to another person and to You. Assure me and be with me, in this Step, for without this Step, I cannot progress in my recovery. With Your help, I can do this, and I will do it.

### 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 mental and spiritual health.

*Prayers for Steps 7 through 12 will appear next month.*

## Finding Forgiveness by Praying for That Person

By Margarita F

Many of us found it very difficult to forgive those who wronged us, especially in a relationship. People can be very cruel to each other. Both have expectations of the other and when those expectations are not met, anger begins to grow. Along with anger come all of the other negative feelings that corrode our souls. The love we felt turns into hate that is stronger than the love could ever be. That hate is what keeps us bound together, we are still in a relationship with that person, only its based on hate. Hate destroys our soul and our spirit.

In forgiving someone, we don't accept their behavior because it is unacceptable. We do not accept our behavior toward that person because we are in denial and refuse to admit our part in it to the degree that will release us from the denial. In order to survive we must find a way to cut that bond.

First, what is forgiveness? It is the act of releasing. It is the act of understanding. It is the act of removing that hate from within our soul. Yes, it is very difficult to do, but it can be done. It needs work on a daily basis, journaling those feelings whenever they come up, praying for that

## Back of the Book

### **Tightrope: Thinking and Acting**

*The stories in the back of the Big Book were believed by Bill Wilson to be the most important part of the tome, yet they are often overlooked. Readers are invited to supply a favorite thought or theme from a story.*

**By Anonymous, Gulf Gate Noon Group**

A major factor in repeated failures of the author of the story, *Tightrope* (pp. 359, Fourth Edition) to attain sobriety was his dogged refusal to accept a Higher Power. After many failures, and returning from ever-lower bottoms, the author writes, "(My sponsor) suggested that for me a good starting point would simply be recognition of the fact that I had failed in running the world—in short, acceptance of the fact that I was not God. He also suggested that I might try occasionally to act as if I believed. Somewhere I had heard that it is easier to act yourself into a new way of thinking than to think yourself into a new way of acting, and this made sense in the context of "acting as if."

This "acting" first eventually led him "to accept the idea of a force that moved in the rooms and animated A.A. members with a sense of unconditional love."

Adding service work to this new reliance on a Higher Power led to long-term sobriety. He summed up, "When I first came to this fellowship, I had lost my health and sanity, my friends, much of my family, my self-respect, and my God. In the years since, all of these have been restored to me."

When I started going to meetings I was so shaky there were white caps in my coffee cup. — A.A. *Grapevine archives*

person; yes PRAYING for that person, that he have everything you want for yourself in your life from the God of your understanding. At first the prayer is said in bitterness, but it will change. If you continue to pray for him, her or them; you will learn that you were a volunteer, that you were as sick as that individual, that you are becoming well, and then you will finally get to the point where you know within you that it was a learning experience necessary to make you the loving person you are today.

When forgiveness occurs it does not mean the relationship is to continue, the relationship simply fades into your past. The Hate Relationship is dead.

### **WHAT FAITH WILL PROVIDE**

**When I come to the edge of all the light I know, and am about to step off into the darkness of the unknown, FAITH is knowing one of two things will happen:**

- **There will be something solid to stand on.**
- **I will suddenly know how to fly.**

# Remembering Ernie Kurtz

By Glenn C.

Moderator of the AAHistoryLovers

Trained as a Catholic priest in the old days, when everybody had to know Latin, Ernie Kurtz's last words to me were:

"Oremus pro invicem as we used to say."

That means "let us pray for one another."

And that was Ernie, wanting to make sure we knew — in spite of the fact that he was the one who was on hospice care and waiting for the end — that he was praying back the other way for you and me too.



Kurtz

I still remember meeting him for the first time, when he kindly invited me to have dinner with him at the Akron National Archives Workshop in 1997. That was more than 17 years ago — such a long time ago!

I am so grateful to God for being allowed to walk together with him for all those years since. It's been a great journey, experiencing the wisdom in his books *The Spirituality of Imperfection* and *Not God*, two great books about A.A.

He was one of the kindest, most honest, most caring, most generous men I have ever been privileged to know. He was unfailingly and steadfastly dependable through whatever came his and my way.

I know that the angels will place a starry crown on his head, and that the souls of the just will welcome him with hymns of praise.

I hope he understood all the gratitude I had for all that he had done for me — and for the rest of us too.

We wouldn't have had an AAHistoryLovers group, for example, if he hadn't been there supporting it from the very beginning.

But I am still going through an incredible amount of grief. I will miss him so much.



"Mummy, did you get your drinking problem from Gramma?"

## Bill Wilson Called Self-Evaluation "Good but Rough Medicine"

"My self-analysis has frequently been faulty. Sometimes I've failed to share my defects with the right people; at other times, I've confessed their defects, rather than my own; and at still other times, my confession of defects has been more in the nature of loud complaints about my circumstances and my problems. "Nevertheless, I think I've usually been able to make a fairly thorough and searching job of finding and admitting my personal defects. Yet this pretty well-ventilated condition is nothing for self-congratulation. Long ago I was lucky enough to see that I'd have to keep up my self-analysis or else blow my top completely. Though driven by stark necessity, this continuous self-revelation — to myself and to others — was rough medicine to take. But years of repetition has made this job far easier."

A.A. Co-Founder, Bill W., June 1958  
"Take Step Eleven,"  
*The Language of the Heart*

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## 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. What do I tell a 'chronic relapser'?** For the last few years, this woman will join my home group, appear to work the program, get her life together only to drift away. Sometime later she'll show up again and start over from a lower bottom.

A. The wisdom of elders: "An alcoholic will always walk in the shadow of tragedy — eternal vigilance is the price of sobriety". Complacency is the mortal enemy of sobriety — which doesn't come free. Changing your life requires continual effort which can be enjoyable. We have the guidance (H.P. & sponsor), the structure (the steps), the resources (literature) and the energy (fellowship) to keep us on the road to a better life. All we have to provide is the willingness to take that path every day.

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**Q. I've had many disappointments in my life and I don't get much sympathy. Now my sponsor tells me to 'get off the pity pot'. Why is he being so mean?**

A. We all need some divine inspiration but I couldn't feel close to God when I was feeling sorry for myself — because I was in the way. When I came to A.A., I wasn't much but I was all I thought about. Try being grateful for getting to your age and thank the people that brought you this far — and smile if you haven't had a drink today.

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**Q. Ah, seventh month, seventh step! Summertime and the living is easy. This step seems to be a 'nothing-burger'.**

A. Contraire, silver-tongued wonder. Seventh step discussions often focus on humility; but how does that apply to our daily routine? In the seventh step prayer, we ask to be useful to God and our fellows. That means doing service, both within A.A. (make coffee to cleanup and whatever in between) and your outside life (help a struggling kid, thank a clerk, and try random acts of kindness).

# 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 May

Gerry O. 35  
Amoret T. 24  
Kathy H. 16  
Jim S. 5  
Steve Ç. 3  
Debbie S. 2

## Bee Ridge East Group June

Tom H. 43  
Lou S. 17  
Delores 4  
Robert 1

## Early Big Book June

Tom H. 43  
Bill S. 29  
Karen C. 16  
Dee M. 4  
Karen H. 1

## Early Bird May

Gaston S. 39  
Mike H. 17  
Vickie B. 5

## June

Bobby K. 25  
Eileen P. 6

## Friends of the Pelican

**June**  
Terry L. 34  
Ken M.. 7  
Kristin R. 2

## Gulf Gate Noon June

Joe G. 32  
Suzanne R. 18

## L'wood Ranch 12 & 12 June

Barry S. 35  
Pat C. 30  
Kate M. 25  
Ron H. 7  
Kathy B. 5  
JO C. 1

## Monday Nite Men's June

James G. 2

## Oasis June

Bill D. 15

## Primary Porpoise

**June**  
Carol K. 45

## Sober Living Group June

Neil A. 32  
Jim B. 26  
Lydia 2

## Sunrise June

Ernie D. 27  
Jan S. 12  
Scott C. 5  
Chuck E. 4

## Women in the Solution June

Cathy H. 17  
Ricki L. 5  
Val F. 2

## Compromise Key to Finding Useful Life

“One qualification for a useful life is ‘give-and-take,’ the ability to compromise cheerfully. Compromise comes hard to us ‘all-or-nothing’ drunks. Nevertheless we must never lose sight of the fact that progress is nearly always characterized by a series of improving compromises. There are circumstances in which it is necessary to stick flat-footed to one’s convictions. Deciding when to compromise and when not to compromise always calls for the most careful discrimination.”

*Bill W., Twelve Concepts for World Service, pp. 39-40 As Bill Sees It, p. 59*

**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.

## Upcoming Events

- *Gratitude Dinner, Saturday, Nov. 14, Mennonite Church on Bahia Vista*
- *Central Office Open House Dec. 5*

## The Wisdom of a Teen

Our literature says that I have a daily reprieve from alcoholism based on my spiritual condition. Today I have the greatest show on earth going on in my life, based upon my spiritual condition. And it’s good so I want to keep the good.

Since the promises have come true and the statement about my spiritual condition proves to be true, then to me it proves our literature is true. As I enhance my spiritual life, my whole life gets better.]

In Grade 11, my daughter Olivia wrote a paper on “God” for a world religions course she was taking. At the end of that paper she stated:

“ I do not know if I believe in God but my father believes in God and it certainly has changed his life and therefore his children’s lives for the better”  
—Anonymous

## There’s Only One Problem With Doing Nothing

At my home group meeting, we were going over the *As Bill Sees It* discussion of “Complacency.”

Many members were sharing on their experience, strength and hope when one of our old timers was commenting on how he has never been scarred with an education and for him the definition of “complacency” was that it was a fancy word for “Being flat butt lazy.”

He then went on to say that at times it was okay to do nothing. However, there was one problem with doing nothing. And what was this problem?

When you are doing nothing it is hard to figure out when you have finished! —Chris C

## HELPLINE

**MAY TOTAL CALLS 309**

Meeting time/place	233
In lieu of 12 step call	7
Actual 12 step calls	5
Al-Anon Calls	3
Special Needs	0
Miscellaneous	61

