



# Sara-Mana Intergroup

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

On the web at [aasrq.org](http://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.

August 2013

Central Office (941-351-4818)

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

## My bottom was a concrete drive

June 8, 2002 was my hit-bottom day. I hit the concrete drive when I came home that night from having had far too much to drink, again.

I'd been out for happy hour, came home for a couple of drinks, then back to the bar for more vodka. I don't remember driving home that night. All I do remember is falling on the driveway and not being able to pull myself up. I awoke the next morning in bed. My knees and toes were covered with raw places where I must have tried to crawl to get either inside the car or garage.

I didn't wake up with a terrific hangover. I did have, however, the feeling that had God not been my copilot that night, I never would have made it home. It is amazing that I didn't hit something or someone, or that the guard at the gatehouse would not have noticed my condition and called the police.

My thoughts that morning were that last night absolutely had to be my last drunk. I didn't think, however, that I might be an alcoholic. I just had a few too many. Someone else in my household didn't agree, and three days later I was the subject of an intervention. I saw a counselor, but didn't really have my heart in it.

Three weeks later, I agreed to attend an A.A. meeting. I entered the room thinking I might not stay the full hour, but within 30 minutes I knew I was in the right place, and that, yes, I was an alcoholic, that I was powerless over alcohol and that my life had become unmanageable.

Eleven years have gone by, and I am still in a state of bliss. Thank you A.A. and all of my fellow A.A.ers for making my life worth living again.

*William K.*

## This could very well be a test of the term, 'willing to go to any length'

One of our home group members, J., moved half way across the world about three months ago. Soon after, we received an email from him. No surprise that he missed the fellowship of our home group and the abundance of meetings in our community. The separation was more poignant because of the dearth of A.A. meetings in his remote location. The closest meeting is over an hour's drive from his residence, meets once a week, and no one speaks English.

J., a technology wizard compared to this writer, asked if our

home group would be willing to connect him via Skype to our Monday night meetings. Over a copy of J.'s email, we held a "mini" group conscience meeting after the regular meeting. The approval for J.'s electronic attendance was unanimous.

That same evening a young man with 3 months sobriety, C., chose us as his home group. After learning of J.'s dilemma, C. volunteered to use his Smart Phone and his sober smarts to bring J. in from the dark.

On the first night C. could not get a signal strong enough to sustain a connection with J.'s computer. Bummer. The next attempt, Monday, May 20, C. was in place, the meeting started, the topic was "newcomers," but there was no mention of J. or Skype or anything techno. But at the end of the meeting C. showed the screen on his phone and there was J., in his signature Oxford shirt saying hi to all of us. We could not have ripped the grin from his face. Happy ending.

However, fast forward a couple of weeks to our regular monthly business meeting, when group members who had not been present at the "mini" meeting, expressed alarm at the blatant violation of Tradition 11, and the threat to group members' anonymity. Fear, that evil and corrosive thread, divided the group conscience. An ad hoc committee was formed and charged with contacting GSO in search of guidelines for handling this new technology of communication. Pending the delivery of that information, the group will vote on whether to continue Skyping J. into his home group meetings. Stay tuned.



**"I might have been born one, but that doesn't mean I have to drink like one."**

## Words on Gossip

**G**ossip is one of the cardinal sins. It is not a single act like murder, that stops one's life and falls back to



punish the offender. It is the breath of the Devil, soiling every ear it touches. It is the most deadly of poisons. It blights many lives, it smites the innocent with the guilty.

An old Italian legend tells the following: In the old days, a peasant confessed to a priest that he had

slandered an innocent man. The priest said to him, "For your penance do this now: Take a bag of chicken down. Go to every yard in the town and drop one bit of down into each garden. Do not miss one yard. When you have finished, return to me. The sinner believed his punishment was light. With his bag of down he made the circuit of the village and carefully dropped one soft feather into each garden. Then he reported to the priest, saying: "I have done my penance."

"No, my son," replied the old abbe. "You will not have done your penance until you take this bag, go again on your rounds, collect every feather you have dropped, and bring it here to me."

The gossip protested that it would be impossible: he could not find the bits of down in a lifetime; many of them had blown far away.

"So it is with gossip," replied the priest. "It is easily dropped. But never again, no matter how hard you try, can you gather back the words you have so thoughtlessly scattered."

*Thanks to Cleveland, Ohio's Central Bulletin*

## YOU need to know this

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

**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.

**REMEMBER WHEN GROUP** is moving and as of September 1 will meet on Sunday at Concordia Lutheran Church, 2185 Wood Street, Sarasota, at 7 p.m.

**MIDNIGHT HOUR GROUP** now meets Monday-Sunday at Concordia Lutheran Church, 2185 Wood Street, Sarasota.

**MORNING WOMEN** are needed to take the 7:30 a.m. meetings into the women's recovery pod at Sarasota county jail. The Tuesday time slot can be claimed by four friends/sponsors/sponsees for their own team, to mix and match Tuesday mornings as it best suits them or we can also accommodate a 'fewer friends' group. By 8:30 you are free to spend the rest of the day as you see fit. See the H & I (Hospitals and Institutions) committee portion of the General Service section at the [www.aasrq.org](http://www.aasrq.org) website to download an application and get information on submitting it.

**PLEASE SAVE ALL JULY ISSUES OF THE GRAPEVINE**, any July issue, any year, as they are always the 'prison issue'. Give them to your GSR to turn in to the Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC) chair, Skip P. at the monthly meeting, or drop them off at central office marked for PI/CPC. If you see Carol K., Dave S., Janet B., Skip P. or any other member of the committee, they'll be glad to take them. We use all we can get for our presentations to the law enforcement community.

**H & I SECRETARY NEEDED.** Job Description: a sense of humor; ability to attend monthly H & I meetings - 2nd Wed. of the month from 7-8 p.m.; ability to take notes with accurate content of meeting discussions and/or motions and votes; familiarity with creating, editing and distributing as an attachment word processing documents. Service Inventory Questions: are you able to serve, are you willing to serve, do you have the time to serve? If interested, please contact Cynthia, preferably e-mail, at [hni@aaasrq.org](mailto:hni@aaasrq.org) or 228-7031.

**MOTHERS & INFANTS** program needs women with one year of sobriety to take meetings to them once a month. Contact [ldross@comcast.net](mailto:ldross@comcast.net) or call 941-320-8389.



## 3 for August

### Step 8

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

### Tradition 8

Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ spe-

cial workers.

### Concept 8

The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of over-all policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services.

## Gratitude Dinner date set, alternate chair elected

The Sara-Mana Intergroup set a date for this year's Gratitude Dinner and elected a new alternate chairperson at its July 16 meeting at the Central Office.

November 14 was set for the Gratitude Dinner. The Bradenton Municipal Auditorium, located in the Bradenton City Centre, was selected as the location.

The site, which also hosted the recently held Founders Day Banquet, was overwhelmingly recommended by those groups represented at the meeting. Intergroup delegates also approved the use of round tables, Chef Paul as the caterer, a \$15 charge to attend and said that there should be no specific dress requirements.

Doug R., whose home group is Saturday Night Speakers, was elected as the Intergroup alternate chairperson. His experience in organizing festivities such as the Gratitude Dinner, is expected to provide a head start for this year's effort. The treasurer's position, also open, was not filled at the July 16 meeting.

## Fish story #2



**"No matter how hard I tried to quit, I kept drinking like a fish."**

## Blessed with a spiritual awakening

My Dad passed away during the "height" of my bottom. I could have been by his side when he "crapped out," as he would say, but drinking in the hospital was frowned upon and would have taken from my isolating from the rest of the family.

My memory of his funeral is blurry, needless to say, and I didn't think much of it at the time (of course).

Several years later I was blessed with a spiritual awakening and miracle of confessing my powerlessness over alcohol and found A.A.

I was visiting Daddy's grave and for the first time I had gone alone. What an opportunity to make my amends to the greatest man I ever knew!

To my amazement, several hours passed as I meditated, talked, prayed and cried to Daddy. What an inspirational experience working the 9th step, freeing myself of my past behavior as an ungrateful drunk.

As I proceeded down the hill to my car with a heart and soul full of gratitude for the A.A. program and its suggestions (living amends), I couldn't help but have that small wonder of "did he hear me?" Will this really work on my deceased Daddy?

I got in the car, looked up the hill to bid Daddy farewell, turned the key and Fleetwood Mac on the radio sang to me... "Don't You Look Back, Don't You Look Back" from their hit *Don't Stop*. All righty then. You did hear me, Daddy! And I now know this program works for those who work it!

I just had to laugh at my Dad and comment to him that I never realized he liked Fleetwood Mac!

Now I may RIP along with him.  
Peace & Prayers

Pat K.

## Grapevine

### Quote of the Day

*"I pray for the willingness to listen carefully to everyone I encounter, for some may have the words I need to hear."*

Sterling Ala., April 1990  
"Unlikely Teachers"

## Dear Alkie

**Dear Alkie:** Why do you go to so many meetings?

**Alkie:** If I miss one day of meetings, I know it; if I miss two days of meetings, my family knows it; if I miss three days of meetings, everyone knows it!

**Dear Alkie:** I've got so many problems with other people! In fact, I can't stand most of them anymore. Can AA help?

**Alkie:** There are only two answers to any issue that involves another person. I was wrong; please forgive me---or you were wrong and I forgive you.

**Dear Alkie:** I keep hearing in meetings that I "should do the next right thing", but I never know what that is. Can you help?

**Alkie:** If you don't know what the next right thing is, do the next loving thing.

**Dear Alkie:** I get so upset with people! Any tips?

**Alkie:** Mentally levitate when you are upset. Try viewing the situation from God's perspective or seeing someone as God sees them.

**Dear Alkie:** You've been sober a long time. Do you still get emotional pain?

**Alkie:** Sometimes. Emotional pain lets me know there is something wrong with my thinking just as physical pain lets me know there is something wrong with my body

**Dear Alkie:** Now that I've stopped drinking, I'm so much happier, I want everyone I know to get happy too. In fact, I caused so much misery, I feel responsible now to get them happy. Any advice?

**Alkie:** I'm not responsible for anyone's happiness but my own; however, I can be responsible for someone's unhappiness by being thoughtless or misbehaving!

# ANNIVERSARIES

Groups: email birthdays to newsletter@aaasrq.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. July anniversaries appear in August.

## BEE RIDGE EAST

**July**  
Ed K. 37 years  
Bob McK. 36 years  
Jack W. 34 years  
Robert S. 20 years  
Joe F. 3 years

## DONUT HOUR

**July**  
Ed King, 37 years  
Paul 33 years  
Linda B. 27 years  
George S. 25 years

## EARLY BIG BOOK

**July**  
Harry R. 22 years  
Joyce P. 8 years  
Mary Ann 1 year

## EARLY BIRD

**July**  
Sher K. 14 years

## FRIDAY NITE LIT

**July**  
Shirley P. 19 years  
Reid K. 2 years

## FRIENDS OF THE PELICAN

**June**  
Terry L. 32 years  
Ken M. 5 years  
**July**  
Patrick W. 11 years  
Bob D. 6 years  
John K. 6 years  
Jennifer A. 3 years

## FROM THE HEART

**July**  
Jo G. 17 years  
Barbara P. 8 years  
Barbara B. 7 years

## GULF GATE NOON

**July**  
Tom T. 32 years  
Joan H. 24 years  
Marc P. 15 years  
Jim B. 6 years  
Kelly 6 years  
Michael M. 4 years  
Shawndra 4 years  
Ernie 2 years

## HAPPY COOKIE HOUR

**July**  
Rick M. 18 years  
Lorri C. 14 years  
Rob. Mc. 11 years  
Joyce P. 8 years  
Joe F. 3 years  
Troy S. 3 years  
Felisity 2 years  
Kialeay 2 years  
Kristin 2 years  
Cory 1 year  
Liz 1 year

## LUNCH BUNCH

**June**  
Bob 39 years  
Robert 19 years  
Dave 3 years  
Chuck 2 years  
Delores 2 years  
James 1 year

## July

Susan C. 19 years  
Holly H. 16 years  
Tony R. 4 years

## OAK STREET

**July**  
Hazel 32 years  
Tom L. 32 years  
Mimi McA. 31 years  
Lynn L. 25 years  
Victoria G. 25 years  
Don B. 17 years  
Frank O. 15 years  
Cathie D. 14 years  
David S. 13 years  
Patrick W. 12 years  
Robyn D. 10 years  
Galina S. 6 years  
Mitchell G. 5 years  
Ricardo R. 3 years

## PRIMARY PORPOISE

**June**  
Carol K. 43 years  
**July**  
Victoria G. 25 years  
Steven B. 9 years

## SERENITY

**June**  
Adam W. 1 year

## July

Skyway Bob 34 years  
Rebecca B. 31 years  
Jon N. 6 years  
Dova H. 2 years

## SOBER LIVING

**July**  
John W. 24 years  
Mary F. 4 years

## St. ARMAND'S

**July**  
Bill D. 40 years  
Joan D. 35 years  
Luann L. 34 years  
Dave S. 10 years  
Robyn D. 10 years  
Stan 6 years  
Mitchell B. 5 years  
J.W. 4 years  
Shawndra B. 4 years

## SUNRISE

**July**  
Ron W. 27 years  
John W. 24 years  
Susie W. 14 years  
Ray L. 12 years  
Skip M. 10 years  
Mike T. 9 years  
Larry W. 8 years  
William E. 8 years  
Fred A. 7 years  
Tracy M. 4 years  
Dean L. 3 years  
Joe F. 3 years  
Michele S. 2 years

## GRAPEVINE

### Quote of the Day

"Belonging to a group makes life an opportunity for me ... something to encourage the best in me while it helps to keep me humble about the worst in me."

© The AA Grapevine, Inc.

## The good old days?

My wife hosted a dinner party for both sides of our entire family and everyone was encouraged to bring all their children, as well.

During dinner, my four-year-old niece stared at me from across the table. The girl could hardly eat her food for staring. I checked my shirt for spots, felt my face for food, patted my hair in place but nothing stopped her from staring at me.

I tried my best to just ignore her but finally it was too much for me. I finally asked her, "Why are you staring at me?"

Everyone at the table had noticed her behavior and the table went quiet waiting for her response.

My little niece said, "I'm just waiting to see how you drink like a fish."

## HELPLINE TOTALS

### July 2013

Call count .....213

### BREAKDOWN:

Meeting time/location .115

In lieu of 12 step call ....14

Actual 12 step calls .....9

Al-Anon Call .....8

Special Needs .....0

Miscellaneous .....67

Spanish Helpline.....2

Only two Helpline shifts are currently available: 3 p.m.-6 p.m. and 9 p.m.-12 midnight. Please call Central Office at (941) 351-4818.

**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@aaasrq.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.