



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 difference.

AUGUST 2014

Central Office (941) 951-4818

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

Her Decision to Make: Get Sober or Die

By Barbara S.

I looked forward to last Feb. 13 because it would mark the end of my first year of sobriety.

In drinking days, being sober seemed a faraway dream. It was always a goal in the future to hope and pray for. Gut feeling, there wasn't really a choice for me. It was get sober or die.

A recovering alcoholic spoke to me of the Serenity Room meetings. In drinking days, I often wished for just that one word, "Serenity." So I wobbled in one afternoon and sat down in a meeting. I felt at home immediately. There were people who smiled and were warm and welcoming. With sweaty palms, tired eyes, a lot of fear and hope, my journey to sobriety and living in the light had begun. The woman who brought me to the rooms died from alcohol and drugs.

Who knew the blessings and "ahah" moments to be found. At first all I had to do was try to listen and

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How About Incredibly Short Memory?

What's the ISM in Alcoholism?

What is this ISM part of alcoholism? Good acronyms for ISM are:

I, Self, Me; I Sponsor Myself; Internal Spiritual Malady; Incredibly Short Memory; InSide Me; I Sabotage Myself.

In short the "ism" is all about the alcoholic and how he or she copes with the many things encountered in life. It is one of self-centeredness taken to the extreme. The ism involves more than the act of drinking. Feelings of inadequacy, isolation,



Book Prices Going Up; Big Book \$9.50 Oct. 1

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services will raise book prices on Oct. 1, 2014. A list of the increases is available in the office but for your information, Big Books will be increased from \$8.00 to \$9.50.

The amount of increase varies among book titles but ranges from 75 cents to \$2, depending on the publication.

restlessness, anxiety, depression, fear and guilt are just a few of the "isms" that the alcoholic wrestles with daily. Other isms rear their ugly heads in unflattering shows of overreaction, blaming others, and defending oneself from perceived threats and fears.

All of these feelings are internalized and exposed in twisted forms of alcoholic reality to friends and family and treated with alcohol by the alcoholic still suffering from the disease of alcohol-ISM.—Erik C

Our Website Getting Major Overhaul

Our website — aasrq.org — has been undergoing long-needed changes. So far we have changed how some of the information can be accessed. In the quick link section, you can access GSO, District IV General Services, Sara Mana Intergroup, Area 15 and this newsletter. Once there, with one click of your mouse you can navigate thru each of those links. In the top bar there is a newcomer section and a Spanish tab.

You can find a meeting, view and print our district calendar, see what A.A. and related events are coming up, find other A.A. resources and find out where the Central Office is, and what the office does.

His Program Works From Inside Out

By Arnie J

The chilling rime of winter coated the window pane. With a child's nose pressed to the glass, I watched as the freshly fallen snow covered the homes and lawns with a blanket of innocence. White was the color of my dreams.

The 1950's were my adolescent years in Brooklyn; I was growing along with that literary tree. Our family was enveloped in the safety and warmth of unconditional love; life was good, my childhood was blessed. My parents were professional people who had their feet firmly grounded on terra firma, and they passed their values of devotion, education, and dedicated work onto their children. They led by example; there was no alcoholism in my family.

Those early formative years were

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She Found Her Solution in the Seventh Step Prayer

By Anonymous

One of the most glaring defects I possess is passing judgments. And I have to admit there were times when I enjoyed it and it was always justified. In my own twisted reality, no one was doing anything correctly. I judged and belittled people at work, I criticized friends and family members and I judged people in A.A. meetings. At work, everyone was afraid to talk to me and I was even asked to take a leave of absence for a month. At home, my husband had stopped talking to me altogether. One of my best friends could not confide in me because she was afraid that I would judge her. This kind of action would lead me to such resentments and depression that I was sitting in a lonely hotel room at three in the morning, unable to go home, pondering thoughts of suicide. I was six years sober at the time.

The resentment gripped me so tight, it was paralyzing. Loneliness tortured me. I mistreated everyone and I wondered why I felt so alone. My behavior continued on and I never really asked my Higher Power to remove the defect either. To this day, I am not sure why I never asked for his help. Maybe, I thought in his world I wasn't worth helping. I knew deep down that I was useless, inadequate and worthless. Isn't this why I judge people? It gives me a sense of illusion that I am superior or better than 'you/they' are.

I was at a big book study meeting one night when we were discussing step seven. We read the seventh step prayer. Then it hit me. The sentence that stood out was, "I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad." I don't get to keep anything, not even good! I remember my sponsor telling me, I should not worry about giving "good" to God because I had nothing that was good. I agreed. God takes all of me, so He can do with me and build with me. It is only then that I can become the person He intended me to be. After the meeting we all went to eat at a restaurant. There I sat, unable to gather any words to say. Tears were just streaming down on my face. And I said, "I am so messed up." I was finally willing to have God "remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to him and my fellows."

I have had many ups and downs in sobriety, like many of us do. But it's been a long time since I've had that indescribable lonely feeling that is so powerful, it can lead me to thoughts of suicide. Today, I am able to love and understand others. I am able to share my dark past with others. I am asked by newcomers if I can help them with the steps. I am less selfish and less judgmental. How can this happen to someone like me? The only explanation is I have God. I don't think my defects will be removed completely. There is that thing called self will. I believe what it says in the book, "follow the dictates of a Higher Power and you will presently live in a new and wonderful world, no matter what your present circumstances!" And it is indeed WONDERFUL!

The Newsletter Depends Upon Its Friends Submit your article to
newsletter@asr.org



Inside Out

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filled with nurturing and camaraderie. There were the normal ups and downs of a large home filled with six children; we were forever up to something. When queried why we didn't have a dog, my father's stock reply was, "why do we need a dog? We have six kids." The front door was always open, with a constant flow of interesting people at our dinner table. However, there was a 'bad moon rising' beneath my exterior of normalcy; it was "cunning, baffling, and powerful."

The origins of my alcoholism were manifested deep within and I was traveling on a road which I could not see. Though there were detours along the way, the bottle was always my destination.

My alcoholism is not unique. My war stories are your war stories. My core values were those of my environment. From early on, I was learning to live my life from the OUTSIDE IN. My self-worth was defined by the instant gratification of exterior stimuli. This was not something that was overtly taught by my parents, it was gleaned from several sources such as friends, school, and media. Today, as a direct result of the twelve steps and the fellowship of A.A., I understand that in order for me to live a sober and happy life, I must practice two things:

1. Do not pick up that first drink,
2. I must live my recovery as I live my life, from the INSIDE OUT. The interiors of my soul are the battle-grounds of my recovery from alcoholism.

Winston Churchill said, "The farther backward you can look, the farther forward you are likely to see." But you must look from the **inside out**.

The Sufi tell a story:

Past the seeker on the prayer rug came the crippled and the beggar and the beaten. And seeing them, the holy one went down into deep prayer and cried, "Great God, how is it that a loving creator can see such things and yet do nothing about them?"

And out of the long silence, God said: "I did do something about them. I made you."

Her Decision

(Continued from Page 1)

understand some of what was said. It came to me that repetition and regularity of what was said was a good thing for alcoholics. There was a sense of unity and calmness about it all. I grew before I knew I was growing. Along came the time I knew I needed to get a sponsor. There was no question there. My selfishness was kicking and screaming but no, it was to be done and right away. I listened to people speak day after day.

I focused on someone who was there almost every day, had a lot of sobriety and said many things that stayed with me. The first were suggestions on how to stay away from a drink. It was strong and basic. There was much more but I was hooked and lucky enough for her to agree to help me. My time of going it alone and guessing how to go about things was over. What was given to me were the building blocks for the best way you can go about living a happy and sober life.

Don't drink, go to meetings was the "keep it simple" for me, a good beginning as a way not to drink. I added later, to help new A.A.'s: "Take a walk, take a shower!"

Finding a glimpse of the light from the darkness. I am richer than any royal and eternally grateful for the help given to me.

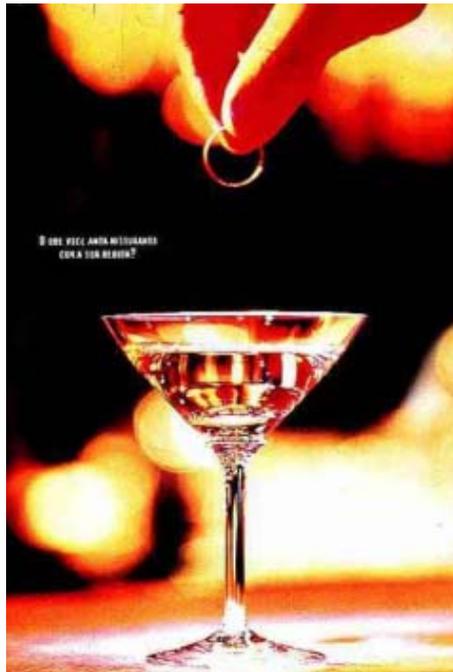
Her First A.A. Tool

The first tool I grabbed hold of was the idea of One Day At A Time. I was told that I didn't have to quit drinking forever. I only need to not drink today.

There were times between meetings when I broke the day into smaller periods of time. When I wanted a drink, I decided to postpone the drink for 15 or 30 minutes. When the minutes passed, I started over with another 15 or 30 minutes. In the meantime, I did the next right thing — dishes, laundry, cooking, calling someone, reading the Big Book.—*Rene F*

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ONE MORE CASUALTY of losing the personal war against alcohol is often the wedding ring.

3 FOR AUGUST

STEP 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. Why not combine 8 & 9: "Made a list of all persons we had harmed and made direct amends to such people..."? "Became willing" in step eight is like "entirely ready" in step six. The difficulty is not in making a list or even making the amends; the real challenge is to become willing. Am I willing to do whatever is necessary to make it right without knowing what that might be? Prepare, then execute. (Comment by Anonymous.)

TRADITION 8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

CONCEPT 8. The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.

month. Email secretary@AAsrq.org and ask to be on the email list.

Dear Alkie

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

Dear Alkie: I've been sober for a few months short of a year. I want to get a divorce, change jobs, and move to another city. A. Z.

Alkie: It's strongly suggested that we make no major changes for at least a year. I think you'll "get" that when you realize how much stress these changes will create in your life. You don't want to leave your home group yet because hopefully you've made a strong connection with the people in the room. I'm sure if you think about this, you'll remember it took you some time to feel comfortable there and to make some A.A. friends. Feeling comfortable is perhaps one of the most important things to consider, since we probably drank because we just didn't ever feel comfortable.

As far as changing jobs and getting a divorce, your sobriety might be a lot more fragile than you think. I'm sure you don't want to take a chance you'll have a relapse. After all, you've worked hard to get where you are right now.

So I suggest you wait some time and discuss these things with your sponsor. We all need to learn patience. Impatience is one of our "isms." That's one I'm still working on!

Dear Alkie:

What is the funniest thing you've ever heard at a meeting?

Alkie: I love this question! You know we laugh a lot at meetings and here's the reason: comedians' definition of humor is "tragedy plus time."

I've just figured out that I've been to at least 9,000 meetings so I couldn't answer that question honestly since I laugh a lot. But I did hear something at my home group about two weeks ago that I thought was very funny (and something I truly relate to). A very wise woman said: "I've long ago given up trying to have a better past."

I hope that puts a smile on your face too.

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.

63rd Ave.

July	
Skyway Bob	35
Rebecca B	32
John S	31
Anthony D	1

Attitude Adjustment

July	
Scott J	17
Mark T	16
Jeanine F	14
Fran C	12
Michael T	10
Jennifer A	4

Bee Ridge East

July	
Ed K	38
Jack W	37
Robert S	21

Donut Hour

July	
Ed King	38
Paul N	34
Linda	28
Howard	10
Mitch	1
Molly	1

Early Bird Group

July	
Sher K	15

From the Heart

July	
Cyndy C	21
Hillary G.	18
Janice R	5

Happy Cookie Hour

July	
Bob G	27
Beth S	18
Lorri C	15
Rob M	12
Troy S	4
June	
Jimmy M	25
J.D	24
Cathy H	16
JTom M	6
Kendra	2
J.P	1

Friends of the

Pelican	
July	
John K.	7
Jennifer A.	4
Betsy L.	1

Gulf Gate Noon

July	
Tom T	33
Joan H	25
Lynn M	24
Jim B	7
Shandra	5
Terry D	4
Jim L	1

Lakewood Ranch

12&12	
July	
Jim C	7

Serenity Group

July	
Rebecca B	32
Jon N	7
Doug H	3

Sober Living

July	
Mary F	5

Women Of Hope

July	
Dolores	26
Lee H	23
Linda E	21
Joe G	18
Cat	4
Lynne M	3
Antoinette D	3

St. Armand's

July	
Bill D	41
Luann L	35
Dave S.	11
Robyn D.	11
Stan	7
Mitchell G	6
J.W	5
Shawndra	5

Sunrise Group

July	
Ron W	28
Susie W	15
Ray L	13
Mike T	10
Larry W	9
Tracy M	5
Joe F	4
Lindsay E	1

How She Gained Humility

By Keli R.

For me, humility is not a natural state of being. I tend to be an egomaniac with an inferiority complex. I'm either the best or the worst, brilliant or a piece of dung. I've never known how to be a worker among workers and I'm a crazy perfectionist. I have found that by working the 3rd Step and learning to be of service it has set the stage for me to work the 7th Step.

I'm glad the Steps are in order because without the first six, I would never have the humility that Step 7 asks of me. I have recently started to feel "right sized" through following my sponsor's suggestions. In the morning I read pages 86-88 from the Big Book, pray and do a little meditation. I'm writing, going to meetings, sharing, reaching out to newcomers and being of service by cleaning up after the meetings.

Plus I have a commitment at my home group. As they say, "It works if you work it."

Speaking Dates Wanted

Are there any groups who need speakers for their Open Speaker Meetings?

Speakers from the As The First 100 group are willing to travel up to 25 miles. Contact Jeff M at (804) 787-3931

Upcoming Events

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.

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

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.

HELPLINE

JULY TOTAL CALLS	291
Meeting time/place	207
In lieu of 12 step call	9
Actual 12 step calls	8
Al-Anon Calls	6
Special Needs	0
Miscellaneous	61
Spanish Helpline	--

