



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

JULY/AUGUST 2016

Central Office (941) 351-4818

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

## Acceptance Means “To Receive with Grace”

By Anonymous

I am so thankful and feel so fortunate to learn of acceptance in the rooms of A.A. When life becomes difficult I often have the attitude that I need to learn to accept, work to accept, pray to accept, but behind it all knowing that I don't have to like it.

Not long ago I heard someone share something on acceptance that I have never heard before. He said, “Acceptance means ‘to receive with grace.’” It has been helping me in many areas of my life. To take what is given, trusting even more, of God's power and love which is God's grace. That gave me a deeper understanding of the third step.

For as long as I remember, I wanted to have children. I was never given the beautiful gift of children. It still stings at times but this new concept of acceptance, to receive (or not to receive) with grace, is filling me up with more faith and helping me grow. The empty spaces are being filled with something even greater and that is the love of my Higher Power.

More is constantly being revealed, a day at a time. I am grateful that is my experience. I will never be able to be thankful enough.

## Get This Newsletter

### Delivered to You by Email

Get your Sara-Mana Newsletter emailed to you as a PDF. Email [edgarc@aol.com](mailto: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.



“Hi, you emailed that you need a ride to a meeting . . .”

## Estimates\* of A.A. Groups, Members as of Jan. 1, 2016

	Groups	Members
United States	60,698	1,262,542
Canada	5,043	85,530
Sub-Total	65,741	1,348,072
Correctional facilities	1,450	35,710
Internationalists	2	66
Total	<b>67,193</b>	<b>1,383,848</b>
Outside U.S. & Canada	50,555	705,850
Grand Total	<b>117,748</b>	<b>2,089,698</b>

\*These estimates are provided by the General Service Office in New York, which does not keep membership records. The information shown here is based on reports given by groups listed with G.S.O., and does not represent an actual count of those who consider themselves A.A. members.

G.S.O. is aware of A.A. activity in more than 180 countries, including 62 autonomous general service offices in other lands. Annually, it attempts to contact those G.S.O.s and groups that request to be listed. Where current data is lacking we use an earlier year's figure.

## I didn't have a drinking problem. I had a stopping problem.

From *Flooded With Feeling*, from the 4th edition of the Big Book. Page 372.

## Gratitude Dinner Set for Nov. 12

Intergroup announced that its annual Gratitude Dinner, the second major gathering of the year for Sara-Mana District 4, will be held on Saturday, Nov. 12.

Location is the now familiar Mennonite Church on Bahia Vista where other recent A.A. dinners including the June Founders Day dinner have been held.

Fellowship begins at 5:30, a buffet dinner will be served at 6:30, and a featured speaker will cap off the evening at 8:30. Price still to be determined.

The church hall holds almost 400 diners and has been sold out at our previous events, so get your tickets early, either from your Intergroup rep or at Central Office.

## Summer Hours for Central Office

Central 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. These summer hours will be in effect until Sept. 30.

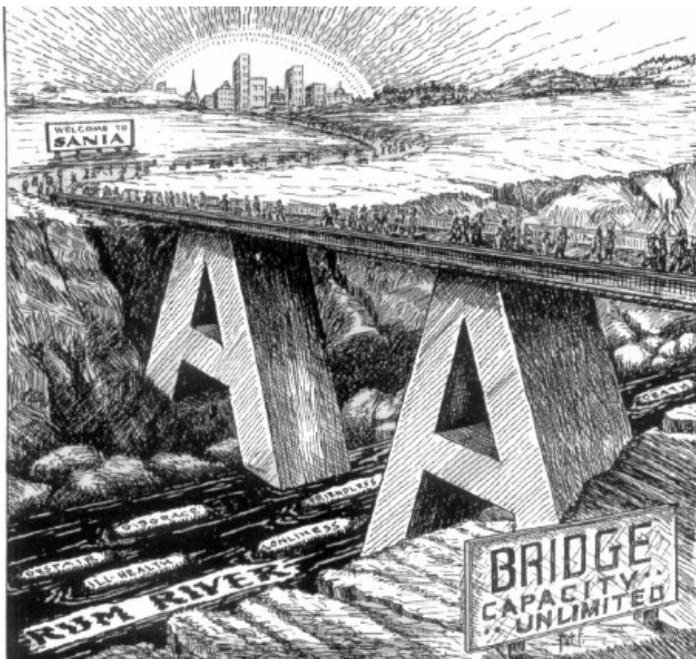
### Heard in the Rooms

Keep coming back, and stay. —Nicky

It's hard to learn anything when you already know everything. Shut up and listen.

—Jack W.

A.A. is really a one-room school house. You learn everything there. —Lisa M.



“Bridge to Sanity” was commissioned for the William White Papers to mark the 80th birthday of Alcoholics Anonymous.

## 3 To Maintain and 4 to Grow

By Chris C.

I was at a meeting today and the topic turned to those with long term sobriety and how many meetings they attend. Simple conclusion: they are sober because they work the program and attend meetings regularly even after 30-40+ years sober.

One gentleman talked of his 87- year-old sponsor who is 42 years sober and attends meetings 5 days a week, another talked of her 35 year sober sponsor who attends meetings daily.

One of these people mentioned a “slogan” I have not heard with my brief 3 years actively involved in the program and fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. The slogan is, “Attend 3 to maintain and 4 to grow”

Place whatever numbers one feels they need to in this slogan but in general whatever one thinks they need to go to for maintaining sobriety, add one more meeting attendance to “grow” in the program.

## Who We Aren’t

“We have denied ourselves personal, government, professionalism, and the right to say who our members shall be. We have abandoned do-goodism, reform, and paternalism. We refuse charitable money and prefer to pay our own way. We will cooperate with practically everybody, yet we decline to marry our Society to anyone. We abstain from public controversy and will not quarrel among ourselves about those things that so rip society asunder—religion, politics, and reform. We have but one purpose; to carry the A.A. message to the sick alcoholic who wants it.”

Bill W., *The Language of the Heart*, p. 211

## Nancy’s Notes

### Key to Steps 8 & 9: Love First

*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.*

Step 8 talks about willingness to make amends, and my experience of that is a good example of my learning in those early days of sobriety. At the time I still didn’t understand all the wonderful aspects of willingness such as the relief when letting go of having to have all the answers and the patience to wait until the right action shows itself in a natural, flowing way (as opposed to struggle). There are more aspects but these are the two that are relevant to my Steps 8 and 9. My daughter was at the top of my Step 8 list and I see now that I didn’t yet have the wisdom to explore the specific ways I harmed her and the ways I needed to change, so my amends to her were more of the same controlling and misguided behaviors: not listening, complex plans, throwing money at her. I learned a lot from that experience and now my ongoing Steps 8 and 9 with her are willingness to accept, to listen, to be flexible, to expect nothing and to *love first*.

### Two Fertile Discussion Topics

To avoid the inevitable groans that go up when the someone suggests “Gratitude” as the topic for the day’s open discussion meeting, try one of these:

—**Why Are You Here Today?** This leads to a remarkable diversity of reasons, many of which are particularly meaningful for the newcomers in the group.

—**What Was Your Defining Moment?** What specific and personal event led you to attend your first meeting? Not the whole drunkalog, but just the single event that got you through the doors for the first time.

### “Conference-Approved” — What It Means to You

In Service Material, the General Service Office writes: “The term ‘Conference-approved’ describes written or audiovisual material **approved by the Conference for publication by G.S.O.** This process assures that everything in such literature is in accord with A.A. principles. Conference-approved material always deals with the recovery program of Alcoholics Anonymous or with information about the A.A. fellowship.

**“The term has no relation to material not published by G.S.O. It does not imply Conference disapproval of other material about A.A. (Emphasis the editor’s).** A great deal of literature helpful to alcoholics is published by others, and A.A. does not try to tell any individual member what he or she may or may not read.

“Conference approval assures us that a piece of literature represents solid A.A. experience. Any Conference-approved booklet or pamphlet goes through a lengthy and painstaking process, during which a variety of A.A.s from all over the United States and Canada read and express opinions at every stage of production.”



Members of a Cleveland, Ohio A.A. group donned Lone Ranger masks for a newspaper interview in the 1940s.

## He Was Granted the Power to Choose

I have the choice today to pick up a drink or not. I have the choice to pray or not. I have the choice to work my program.

The biggest thing that sobriety gave me was the power to choose. When I was boozing and using, my only choice was whether to steal the money from my wife's purse when she was home or wait for her to go to work and get into the rent money.

In sobriety, I have the most essential choice of all . . . to drink or not to drink? That is the question: whether 'tis nobler to suck down the suds or pour 'em in the toilet and cut out the middle man. —*Charlie P*

## We Are Not a Glum Lot Tarzan Slipped

Two very concerned medicine men were staring down at a bruised and battered Tarzan lying unconscious at the base of a giant jungle tree. Scattered about the fallen figure were empty rum bottles. Turning to the other medicine man, the first, shaking his head, sadly demurred, "He must've missed that last Grapevine."

People at A.A. meetings do not speak of drinking, they talk about living: about living the Twelve Steps in all aspects of their lives. —*Ernie Kurtz*

## Prayers for Steps 7, 8

*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.*

### Seventh Step Prayer

My Creator,  
I am now willing that you should have all of me, good & bad.  
I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character

Which stands in the way of my usefulness to you & my fellows.  
Grant me strength, as I go out from here to do your bidding.

### Eighth Step Prayer

Higher Power,  
I ask Your help in making my list of all those I have harmed.  
I will take responsibility for my mistakes &  
Be forgiving to others as You are forgiving to me.  
Grant me the willingness to begin my restitution.

This I pray.

**FAITH** is  
F=Fearlessly  
A=Actively  
I=Intuitively  
T=Trusting  
H=HIM

*From Christopher C.*

## 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. My home group is large, diverse, well attended, and meets often. Problem is getting members to step up for service positions. Everyone likes the comraderie but few want to help with the work. Any ideas?**

A. "Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth" said the late Muhammad Ali. Unfortunately, in every endeavor I've witnessed, it is human nature that the minority of the participants do the majority of the work (see p. 417 for details). Please continue to encourage everyone to help with chores of the meeting but more importantly remind all that "service is an attitude" – welcoming to newbies, compassionate to returnees, and kindness and consideration to whoever you meet (both in and out of the rooms).

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**Q. Drinking brought me very low – complete humiliation before the world. Is the seventh step asking me to grovel even lower?**

A. No, but it's asking to park your ego and seek your higher power's help. Humiliation and humility are different concepts — only you care about your humiliations; everyone else cares if you are humble. The road to hell is paved with selfishness—the road back is paved with humility and selflessness.

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**Q. I'm now at the eighth step, and feel overwhelmed. Any hints on how to prioritize all that deserve a ninth step amend later on?**

A. Focus on those 1) closest to you and 2) who you harmed the most. Immediate and extended family members who trusted and believed in you are the first group. Friends, ex's, bosses, subordinates, victims (if that applies) who you hurt physically, emotionally, or financially make up the second group. Over time, others will popup; you'll know what to do then. Remember, "being willing" means having a sincere, wholehearted attitude and being prepared to listen as well as speak.

# Anniversaries

<b>Bee Ridge East</b>		Lawrence W.	4	George D.	48	
<b>April</b>		Tommy	4	Carol K.	46	
Tom M.	29	Jennifer M.	4	Linda R.	35	
Tom S.	7	Bill D.	1	Melvin.	35	
<b>May</b>		Irene	1	Pattie M.	34	
Maureen S.	14	<b>Lakewood Ranch 12&amp;12</b>			Gayla F.	32
<b>June</b>		<b>June</b>			Barry B.	23
Tom H.	44	Barry S.	36	Linda Mck.	5	
Roger G.	33	Kate M.	26	<b>Sunrise</b>		
Lou S.	18	Ron H.	8	<b>June</b>		
Bob T.	25	Jo C.	2	Ernie D.	28	
<b>July</b>		<b>Monday Nite Men's</b>			Jan S.	13
Robert S.	23	<b>June</b>			<b>July</b>	
<b>Friends of the Pelican</b>		Lou S.	18	Ron W.	30	
<b>June</b>		Jason P. (JP)	3	Susie W.	17	
Terry L	35	<b>Pass-it-On</b>			Ray L.	15
Dolly K.	2	<b>June</b>			Larry W.	11
Amy B.	1	Barbara P.	38	Joe F.	6	
<b>July</b>		Bill B.	9	KeithTV.	4	
Donna D.	29	Carolyn	2	Dan L.	2	
Bob C.	19	<b>July</b>			Henry	2
John K.	9	Jim D.	27	Joe G.	2	
Jennifer A.	6	Austin L.	11	<b>Third Legacy Men's</b>		
Marianne D.	2	Maureen G.	8	<b>July</b>		
Maureen G.	8	<b>Saturday Night Speaker's</b>			Landon S.	2
<b>Gulf Gate Noon</b>		<b>June</b>			Jim J.	2
<b>June</b>		Frank M.	46	<b>Women's Wednesday A.M.</b>		
Joe G	33	<b>Serenity Room</b>			<b>(Holmes Beach)</b>	
Suzanne	19	<b>June</b>			<b>June</b>	
Henry	7	Richard D.	1	Barbara P.	38	
Jon S	1	<b>July</b>			Betty B.	28
<b>July</b>		Rebecca B.	34	Cookie L.	8	
Joan	27	Jon N.	9	Carolyn E	2	
Lyn	26	Doug H.	5	Tammy G.	2	
Jan	15	Bonnie A.	2	<b>*GROUPS:</b>		
Terry	6	<b>Sober Living</b>			<b>Groups: email birthdays</b>	
Jim	3	<b>April</b>			<b>to newsletter@AAsrq.org</b>	
Debbie	2	Kathy H.	28	<b>and put ANNIVERSARIES</b>		
Sharon	1	Maureen C.	26	<b>in the subject line. Cutoff</b>		
<b>Happy Cookie Hour</b>		Greg C.	21	<b>for the newsletter</b>		
<b>May</b>		<b>May</b>			<b>is the last day of the</b>	
Mat	16	Jane S.	29	<b>month. August</b>		
Steve M.	15	Lew B.	10	<b>anniversaries appear in</b>		
Rene P.	11	Katie B.	8	<b>September issue.</b>		
John G.	6	Fred N.	6	<b>June</b>		
Carla Y.	4	<b>June</b>			Neil A.	
Tommy R.	4	Neil A.	33	Jim Mac		
Mike D.	3	Jim Mac	20	<b>July</b>		
Tatiana T.	2	<b>July</b>			Mary Ellen E.	
Paula P.	1	<b>St Armand's Noon</b>			4	
<b>June</b>		<b>June</b>				
Kevin	27					
J.D.	26					
Rick M.	21					
Rene	11					
Tom M.	8					
Sarah	4					

LIFE IS A  
JOURNEY  
TO BE EXPERIENCED  
NOT A PROBLEM  
TO BE SOLVED

Winnie The Pooh



## Service Helps Keep Us Sober

Serenity Place, a 16 bed unit at Doctors Hospital, receives 2 AA meetings per week on Thursday and Saturday afternoons from 2:00-3:00PM. New additions to the volunteer roster are needed now and the commitment is one one hour per month and or as a 'sub' when needed. Ideally, each meeting has a male and female AA member sharing the message with the 'clients/patients'. One year sobriety is necessary. If interested, please contact either Mallory B at 894-2677 or Dianne B at 331-4312. We need your help!

## 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:

Monday, 6pm – 9pm

Tuesday, 6pm – 9pm

\*Helpline volunteers please turn in your counts to [helpline@asrq.com](mailto:helpline@asrq.com)

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



## New Gratitude Room location!

The Gratitude Room, previously at 1819 5th Street West, Bradenton, FL 34205 has moved on July 31st to a new location at 610 10th Street East, Bradenton, FL 34208.

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](mailto: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.