



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/SEPTEMBER 2015

Central Office (941) 351-4818

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

## Special Needs Help at Gratitude Dinner

As preparations are made for our annual Gratitude Dinner scheduled for Saturday, November 14, Intergroup wants to make known that Special Needs assistance will be available to anyone in need. If you have a hearing, sight or mobility challenge but would still like to attend, all you need to do is to call Central Office 941-351-4818, by Nov. 1 to share what kind of assist you need. Several tables will be reserved near the entrance doors and front of the room where wheelchairs and walkers can be placed, and visibility and hearing for the program will be easier. A.A. helpers will be available to deliver your meal and assist with other possible needs.

Please spread the word to those in need and have them call Central Office. We all have a right to be "part of" and enjoy this special annual event.

## How and When to "Turn It Over"

Before "turning it over," one must exhaust every tactic, tool, and strength available to solve the problem. And it is only then, if nothing has worked to solve the problem, that one should turn it over to the care of the Higher Power, saying, "OK, I've done all I can. Now it's up to You."

Since my personal accommodation with HP is based on recognizing that He works through others, **my specific way of turning it over is to ask someone for help** with the problem. In return for the solution I invariably receive, I must allow myself to be an agent of HP, responding to the best of my ability whenever someone asks me for help. —Edgar C.



## Smith House in Akron Dr. Bob Smith Sought "Quietness of Heart"

*A plaque on the desk of A.A. founder Dr. Bob Smith in his historic home reads:*

"Perpetual quietness of heart. It is to have no trouble. It is never to be fretted or vexed, irritable or sore; to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing done against me.

"It is to be at rest when nobody praises me, and when I am blamed or despised, it is to have a blessed home in myself where I can go in and shut the door and pray to my Father in secret and be at peace, as in a deep sea of calmness, when all around and about is seeming trouble."

## Owes "Every Minute" to Higher Power, A.A.

I owe every MINUTE of my sobriety to my Higher Power, which is A.A. My faith in the program gets stronger every day. Without my HP to guide me, I would be hopelessly lost and out there drinking again.

So, I try to stay close to the program and my sponsor and go to meetings to keep in touch with other alcoholics and stay connected to my source of strength! —Miriam R.

## Serenity: How to Get It And Make It Last

By Lisa M.

What is this elusive state of being called serenity? How do you get it? Can you make it last?

When I first came to Alcoholics Anonymous, Jan. 11, 1983, I became aware almost immediately of a feeling I had never had before. I could feel it in the room at my very first A.A. meeting.

I didn't know at that time what the feeling was or what to call it. I had never known that feeling save for very fleeting glimpses of it at different moments in my life.

A.A. introduced me to an entirely different feeling that I now know as serenity. We say the Serenity Prayer at the beginning of every meeting as a way of reminding us what serenity is and how to achieve it.

Serenity, as I've come to understand it over more than 31 years in the program of A.A., is learning to live peacefully with unsolved problems. When life presents me with surprises; challenges such as ill health or death of a loved one, or even financial reversals, is it possible to maintain serenity in the face of such odds?

A.A. tells us, yes it is possible. Through our fellowship and shared wisdom and experience, and yes, hope, we can maintain serenity in the most dire circumstances.

In A.A., we see and experience all manner of courage, watching people go through cancer, loss of a spouse or child to addiction, betrayals, destitution .... all without picking up a drink to "take the edge off" and most importantly, with serenity.

Meetings help us "reboot" our

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## A Prayer for Every Step

*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 last six steps. The first six appeared in the July issue of this newsletter.*

### SEVENTH STEP PRAYER

My Creator, I am now willing that You have all of me, good and bad. I pray that You now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to You and 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 and be forgiving to others, as You are forgiving to me. Grant me the willingness to begin my restitution. This I pray.

### NINTH STEP PRAYER

Higher Power, I pray for the right attitude to make my amends, being ever mindful not to harm others in the process. I ask for Your guidance in making indirect amends by staying abstinent, helping others and growing in spiritual progress.

### TENTH STEP PRAYER

Dear God, I pray I may continue to grow in understanding and effectiveness; to take daily spot check inventories of myself; to correct mistakes when I make them; to take responsibility for my actions; to be ever aware of my negative and self-defeating attitudes and behaviors; to keep my willfulness in check; to always remember I need Your help; to keep love and tolerance of others as my code; and to continue in daily prayer how I can best serve You.

### ELEVENTH STEP PRAYER

God, as I understand You, I pray to keep my connection with You. Open and clear from me the confusion of daily life. Through my prayers and meditations I ask especially for freedom from self-will, rationalization, and wishful thinking. I pray for the guidance of correct thought and positive action. Your will, not mine, be done.

### TWELFTH STEP PRAYER

Dear God, my spiritual awakening continues to unfold. With the help I have received I shall have the opportunity to grow. I am grateful. I pray most humbly to continue walking day by day, practice the principles of this way of life in all I do and say. I need You, my friends, and the program every hour of every day. This is a better way to live.

*The prayers above and the six published in the last issue were taken from The Sponsor's Aide website, which notes, "... This site is NOT endorsed nor sponsored by Alcoholics Anonymous or any group . . ." The site can be found at <http://thesponsorsaide.org/12StepPrayers.htm>*

## How to Maintain Serenity

*(Continued from Page 1)*

spiritual connection with our Higher Power, reminding us that life is full of challenges. We learn what we have control over and what we do not have control over. We gain perspective about how to cope with pain and go through a process even though we are a people who prefer instant gratification.

Recovery in A.A. is a complex and beautiful process of wearing down our rough edges or "character defects." Together with sponsorship, meetings, prayer and meditation and reliance on the 12 steps as a blueprint for living, we can and do learn how to hang out in this life with some measure of serenity.

Reliance on our Higher Power plus maintenance of our program which asks us to continually strive for further spiritual development and secures our feelings of serenity. Together we are granted a higher perspective on life that we just cannot achieve alone.

For the first time in our lives, we are afforded feelings of peace, that had eluded us most of our lives until we found recovery.

It is up to each and every one of us to maintain this state. Every 24 hours, every meeting of A.A., every conversation with our sponsor and connection we make with our Higher Power, serenity is freely given to us. No longer are we slaves to our self-reliance and self-will which only generated anxiety, depression, and frustration.

A.A. bestows on us the gift of serenity.

We can now live comfortably in our own skin and feel the full weight of freedom from addiction to alcohol.

## Sharing Turns Skeletons Into Beacons

I had a huge amount of shame and remorse over the awful things I did while drinking. When new, I heard other people say they also acted badly when they drank, so I did not feel so alone.

After sharing my 5th Step with my sponsor and hearing some of the things she did, I felt the load lighten. Later, as roles reversed and I shared my past with newcomers, the skeletons turned into bright beacons that helped the newcomers and me see the effect alcohol has on us.

I take comfort in the knowledge that it took everything I went through to make me willing to get and stay sober.

I am not proud of many of my past actions, but I am no longer buried in shame and remorse. And I am most grateful that I no longer have to hide skeletons in the closet! For me, that is a huge gift of the program!—*Terry A.*

## Upcoming Events

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

## Smoking Greater Risk to Recovering A.A.

The rates of smoking cigarettes among recovering alcoholics is three times that of the national average, and research indicates that alcoholics are at greater risk for the negative health effects of smoking than other smokers, according to Buddy T, writing on About Health, an Internet news source. The site continued:

“An estimated 21% of the general population smoke cigarettes, but among chemically dependent people, the rate jumps to 80% to 95%. Researchers agree that smoking among recovering alcoholics is more than triple that of the general population.

“Research also shows that because of the damage done to the body by years of heavy drinking, recovering alcoholics who smoke are at a much greater risk for developing health problems related to smoking -- cancer and cardiovascular disease.

“Consequently, the death rate for alcoholics following treatment is 48.1% within 20 years, compared with only 18.5% for the general population. More than half of those deaths are attributed to smoking (50.9%) compared with 34.1% for alcohol.”

## Resentment is Fatal

“It is plain that a life which includes deep resentment leads only to futility and unhappiness. To the precise extent that we permit these, do we squander the hours that might have been worthwhile? But with the alcoholic, whose hope is the maintenance and growth of a spiritual experience, this business of resentment is infinitely grave. We found that it is fatal. For when harboring such feelings we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit. The insanity of alcohol returns and we drink again. And with us, to drink is to die.”

*Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 66*

## Get This Newsletter Delivered to You by Email

Get your Sara-Mana Newsletter emailed to you as a PDF. Email [igsecretary@AAsrq.org](mailto:igsecretary@AAsrq.org) and ask to be added to the email list.

Don't Judge  
Others  
Because  
They Sin  
Differently  
Than You

## How to Get the Most Out of A.A. Meetings

The late Ernie Kurtz responded to a theoretical question on what was the single most important behavior in attending and benefiting from A.A. meetings. He wrote:

“By one’s attitude and bearing to transmit a willing readiness to hear thoroughly, to attend thoughtfully to another, not waiting for the pause in conversation that will allow one to tell ‘what happened to me,’ but truly listening. Perhaps the cruelest words in any conversation are, ‘That reminds me ...’

“If there is one thing that I hope I have learned from my years of study of the story of the program and the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, it is the importance of listening. If there is one thing I would urge on anyone who hopes to be caring and loving and wise, it is to listen.

“Listen!

“For in perhaps surprising measure, that is why — and how — A.A. works.”

## Big Book Translations

A.A. World Service. literature is currently translated into 89 languages worldwide. The Big Book has been translated into 69 languages and translation into 15 additional languages is pending.

## 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 husband has a serious health problem and I am gripped by overwhelming fear – for his well-being and the possibility of my future without him. I’ve been around for a while and know self-induced fear can lead to relapse. What should I do to cope?**

A. FEAR is a primal urge explained as Forget Everything And Run (or words to that effect). Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather how well you deal with fear. Ask for help (from your sponsor, friends and family) and let those in your home group know you’re hurting – it’s important to know you are not alone. In my darkest hours, I have found the Gift Of Desperation (GOD) and true comfort from life’s travails.

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**Q. I picked up my 90-day chip and I have thoroughly studied the Big Book by myself. I learned about the allergy thing from the Doctor’s Opinion and I’ve got alcoholism figured out. Never going to drink again! What do you think?**

A. “Figured it out” is not an A.A. slogan for a good reason! This program is not rational; it’s spiritual. It’s about community and fellowship – receiving help and giving care and compassion to others. We need to “get over ourselves” and develop a sense of humility. And if you think you’ve got humility – you just lost it.

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**Q. During my summer vacation I completed my 8th step list and now I’m ready to make my 9th step amends. Any suggestions since words seem so inadequate?**

A. You are learning, Grasshopper. Words are never enough and the only true amend is the living amend – you just have to change the way you live, behave and feel for the rest of your life. Start with the ones you have disappointed the most. Be patient – regaining lost trust takes time. Let your sponsor help you.

# 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.



## Bee Ridge East

**July**  
 Jack W. 36 yrs  
 Robert S. 22  
 Ed K. 39  
**August**  
 Mark S. 25

## Bay Group

**June**  
 Mike W. 50  
 Carole P. 32  
 Louise C. 20  
 Debbie M. 4  
 Ann B. 3

**July**  
 Hazel O. 34  
 Ken D. 29  
 John W. 26  
 Alice H. 9  
 Rick L. 6  
 Elizabeth S. 2  
 Bob S. 1

## Early Bird

**July**  
 Sher K. 16

## Friends of the Pelican

**September**  
 Paul P. 25  
 Susan B. 12  
 Ray R. 2

**July**  
 Bob C. 18  
 John K. 8  
 Maureen G. 7  
 Jennifer A. 5  
 Betsy L. 2  
 Marianne D. 1

## Lakewood R'h 12& 12

**July**  
 Mike D. 28  
 Elspeth N. 25  
 Jim C. 8  
 Shawn H. 5

## Monday Nite Men's

**September**  
 Grateful Eddie 39  
**August**  
 Dave H. 32  
 Bill W. 17

**July**  
 Greg F. 3  
**June**  
 Jason P. 2

## Oasis Group

**July**  
 Ed King 39  
 Dan N. 16  
 Jerry B. 6  
 Don E. 1  
 Steve S. 1  
**August**  
 Joe A. 26

## Pass-It-On

**July**  
 Jim D. 26  
 Austin L. 10  
 Maureen G. 7

**After 48 years in the program, I still hate to admit I'm an alcoholic. But I am. -----Young Tom**

**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.

## Primary Porpoise

**July**  
 Victoria G. 27  
 Stephen B. 11  
**August**  
 Ken F. 7  
**September**  
 Marcia R. 25

## Sat night Speakers

**Faith Church**  
**July**  
 Greg M. 21  
 Joe M. 5  
 Rick H. 4  
 Ami F. 2  
 Bobby B. 1

## Serenity Room

**July**  
 Mike D. 28  
 Jon N. 8  
 Doug H. 4

## Sober Living

**July**  
 Mary Ellen E. (Emy)  
**August:**  
 Carol M. 26  
 Ron A. 12  
 Arnie J. 2

## Sunrise

**July**  
 Ron W. 19  
 Susie W. 16  
 Ray L. 14  
 Michael T. 11  
 Larry W. 10  
 Joe F. 5  
 Keith V. 3  
 Dan L. 1  
 Joe G. 1

## St. Armand's

**June**  
 George D. 46  
 Melvin 34  
 Linda R. 34  
 Pattie M. 33  
 Gayla F. 31

**July**  
 Luann L. 36  
 Robyn D. 12  
 Stan 8  
 Mitchell G. 7  
 J.W. 6  
 Shawndra 6  
 Sharon W. 1

## Women in the

**Solution**  
**july**  
 Dawn 25  
 Shirley P. 21  
 Lorri C. 16  
 Christina D. 1

## 3rd Legacy Men's Adds Friday Meet

The 3d Legacy Men's Group is adding another meeting at Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, 7461 Prospect Rd. to its schedule.

Beginning October 2, the group will hold a meeting each FRIDAY @ 6:00 PM.

## Need Volunteers for Serenity Place

Two A.A. meetings a week are taken into Serenity Place at Doctors Hospital, a 16-bed behavioral health unit which recognizes that alcoholism/substance abuse are often associated issues.

The meetings take place at 2:00 PM on Thursdays and Saturdays and last 1 hour.

The suggested requirement is a minimum of 1 year sobriety. If you are interested, please contact either Mallory B 894-2677 malloryblank@gmail.com or Dianne B at 331-4312 or [dibu5234@icloud.com](mailto:dibu5234@icloud.com).

We get to keep what we have by giving it away!

**When drinking, I was always there, but never present —Chad**