



Sara-Mana Intergroup

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



September 2013 Central Office (941-351-4818) Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

Who does prison service help?

Taking A.A. meetings into prisons, jails and institutions has been a primary focus of A.A. service throughout the Fellowship for many years – and one greatly appreciated, not only by the inmates inside who need the message and those outside A.A.s who are willing to bring it in, but quite often most notably by those nonalcoholic professionals charged with running such institutions.

A trustee on the A.A. General Service Board says, “There can be no denying that American jails are places into which little light ever penetrates. A.A., however, has brought light into this dark picture, and must steadily bring more and more.”

The warden at San Quentin Prison, one of the first penal institutions to open its doors to A.A., wrote in 1942, “Into the room comes a group of outsiders – smiling, happy, well-dressed men, some of whom had motored from distances as great as 100 miles from the prison. One by one, these men told the inmates, in words that only real alcoholics use and understand, of their experiences with the program.”

If a picture is worth 1,000 words, then this was a picture. For the inmates it meant a new vision of real help when they needed it most, before the first drink, for these men were not preaching something out of books. They were pouring

out their hearts and souls. They were assuring and reassuring.

The unselfishness of the A.A.s was an inspiration not only to the inmates but to the prison administration as well. Simply put, prison service helps us all.

From Box 4-5-9, Spring 2013

Get your newsletter emailed to you in a PDF format each month. Email secretary@aaqr.org and ask to be on the list.

Gratitude: an everyday occurrence for this A.A.er

When something becomes familiar, I usually feel more comfortable. So when the topic of *gratitude* is mentioned at an A.A. meeting, I’m tempted to sit back, sip my coffee and listen to the sharing with ‘one ear’ – with little focus of attention. Like walking along a well-worn path, I enter a mental state of near-daydreaming and let others have a peaceful moment of grace as they share.

But the depth of the principles within the program of A.A. has shown me that disconnection is less productive than participation. A quiet sigh and inner smile will not be very productive in relation to spiritual growth.

Since my own well-being benefits when I trust the spirit of gratitude, it follows that by seeking to abandon complaints and thoughtless actions I will be more willing to *surrender* with a grateful spirit. An “attitude of gratitude” not only contributes to a more manageable life; but allows my inner approach toward situations to have a more positive effect on my outward behavior.

Many spiritual teachers remind us that *waiting is the vocation of the soul*. When it feels like disappointment is all around me—when my life is out of alignment and in fear I seek to control and rearrange my own actions or those around me—it may be time to pause and reflect on gratitude. The strength of shared wisdom on gratitude is a powerful opportunity to rearrange myself and face the realization that I am disconnected from how certain actions are affecting my well-being; but a disconnected spirit-of-the-heart may be crying out for a fresh dose of inspired *gratitude*.

Susan C.



HEARD IN THE ROOMS

- “If I don’t change, my sobriety date will!”
- “Identifying defects is the first step towards change. Many alcoholics would rather die than change, and in fact, many do.”
- “We are products of our past, not prisoners of it. In A.A. we change who we are and how we think to become better, not bitter.”
- “There is no pain in growth, only in resistance to growth.”
- “Step 4 represented who I was without God.”
- “A.A. is a program of enlightened self-interest.”
- “Life is change; growth is optional.”

Reprinted from “The Wisdom and Humor of Recovery” by Jackie C.

“District Four, where service is our core!” say delegates

At the recent Area Quarterly in Ft. Myers, it was determined that we do not have a definitive “tagline” to identify ourselves and describe what our district stands for. Individual members carry the message to groups by sharing their experience, strength and hope, and through General Service, by taking meetings into jails and institutions, presentations to middle schools, serving on committees, stocking literature racks, preserving and organizing our Archive collection, etc.

So, we selected, “District Four—Where Service is Our Core!”

Service is a privilege and one of the CORnerstones of recovery that helps us step outside of ourselves and our egos. Through service we discover that our lives have meaning and that we can make a

difference in someone else’s life expecting nothing in return. We are now givers, not takers and through giving we learn to live our values and find our souls.

See how you can make a difference and touch the lives of others by attending one of our General Service meetings on the 3rd Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. at the Central Office.

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 at the monthly meeting, or drop them off at central office marked for PI/CPC.



YOU need to know this

REMEMBER WHEN GROUP now meets on Sunday at Concordia Lutheran Church, 2185 Wood Street, Sarasota, at 7 p.m.

MIDNIGHT HOUR GROUP continues to meet at West Coast Church of the Cross, 3005 S. Tuttle Avenue, Sarasota. A change of address was mistakenly reported in the August issue.

MOTHERS & INFANTS unit, at First Step on 18th St., is in need of women to conduct A.A. meetings. These mothers are in desperate need of meetings so they can transition to a better way of life for themselves, their newborn babies and into the rooms of AA. Contact hni@asrq.org or 444-9698.

The **NEW WOMEN’S GROUP** meeting on Saturday mornings has now moved to Saturday afternoons at 2:30 p.m. at the Church of the Cross, 5051 26th St West in Bradenton. The location is still the same – it’s just the time that’s changed. Please come and join us. The format has changed also. The first Saturday is a 12/12 meeting, the last Saturday is a speaker meeting and the other Saturdays are readings from the Daily Reflections along with sharing from the readings.

Sarasota County Jail is in need of eight more women for the 7:30 a.m. time slots. Please consider this service commitment to strengthen your sobriety, by giving back what you received from A.A. Contact: cdkruse70@yahoo.com, or go straight to the application on asrq.org. Click Committees, General Service, SCJ application.

Want to know the answer?

Dear newsletter, I saw an H&I committee conclusion to donate books and pamphlets to facilities we bring A.A. meetings into. Is this OK to do?

Question: Can a group accept donations from local businesses, non-A.A. individuals or organizations? Can a group make a donation to a local homeless shelter, treatment facility, etc.?

Answer: Alcoholics Anonymous accepts no outside contributions. In accordance with the Sixth Tradition, A.A. makes no contributions to any outside organization or cause, no matter how worthy.

New date for Gratitude Dinner

A new date (Nov. 15) and venue (Mennonite Church on Bahia Vista in Sarasota) have been announced for this year’s Gratitude Dinner.

The change was necessitated due to the original venue cancelling all agreements/contracts that they had for the rest of the year.

A new site was settled on within two days of the notice, following quick surveys of approximately 15 possible locations. Doug R., InterGroup alternate chair, praised InterGroup and members of the Events Committee for the quick

3 for September

Step 9

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Tradition 9

A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly re-

sponsible to those they serve.

Concept 9

Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.

resolution. “The church can hold up to 450 attendees, has the requisite sound system, stage area and trash containers that we need,” he said.

Karen R. whose story “Crossing the River of De-

cial” was included in the 4th edition of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, will be the speaker.

Look for additional banquet details to be announced in the future.

Vote here for your favorite “a guy walks into a bar” joke

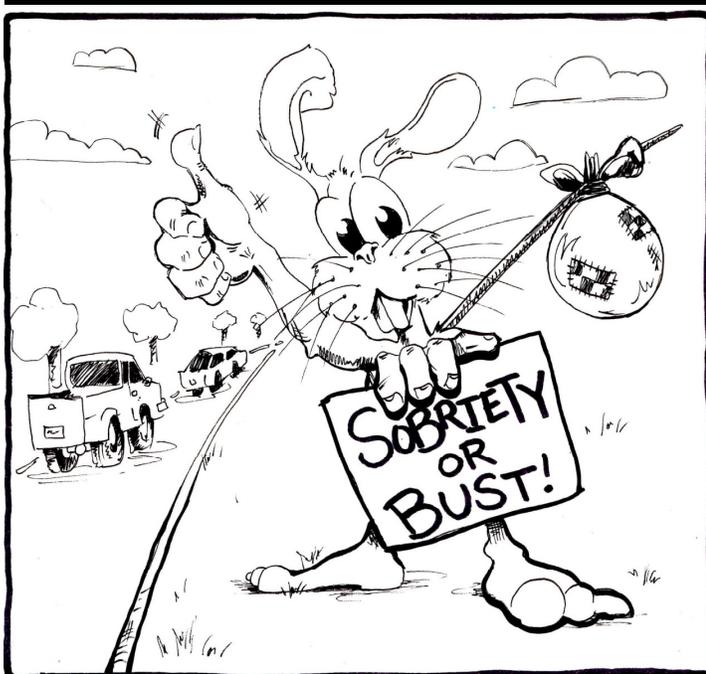
In July, we asked for entries in the newsletter’s “A guy walks into a bar” joke competition.

It would be stretching to say we were overwhelmed with entries: we received four. However, they were all good ones. They are listed below. Now, it’s your turn. Let us know which is the best of the four. Send your vote to newsletter@aasrq.org by the end of September. We’ll announce the winner, with great fanfare, in the October issue.

1. A guy walks into a bar with a slab of asphalt under his arm and says: “A beer please, and one for the road.”
2. So a guy walks into a bar with a pair of jumper cables around his neck. The bartender looks at him and says gruffly, “All right, pal, I’ll let you stay but don’t start anything.”
3. So a guy walks into a bar,

looking really moody and orders a double-whiskey. Then he starts rambling on about how lousy a wife he’s got, until the bartender finally says: “You know, I don’t understand what you’re complaining about. All the other guys in here only have compliments about your wife.”

4. A guy walks into a bar and asks for ten shots of the establishment’s finest single malt scotch. The bartender sets him up, and the guy takes the first shot in the row and pours it on the floor. He then takes the last one and does the same. The bartender asks him, “Why did you do that?” And the guy replies, “Well the first shot always tastes like crap, and the last one always makes me sick!”



Going to any length...

Technology affects a home group

*“Unlike most other VoIP services, Skype is a hybrid peer-to-peer and client-server system. It makes use of background processing on computers running Skype software, and this is reflected in Skype’s original proposed name of **Skype Peer-to-Peer.**”* (From Wikipedia)

Two months ago our home group learned how to electronically insert a remote group member into our Monday night meetings. J. had moved far away for a job, and had landed in a place virtually devoid of A.A. meetings. He emailed a request to Skype him home. A mini group conscience meeting voted yes, and C., a new member of the group, provided the technology and the skills to make it so. Two monthly group conscience meetings later a lot of learning and results have developed.

Two members, polar opposites on the issue of Skyping, comprised an ad hoc committee to investigate A.A.’s experience and report to the next group conscience meeting. The research on both sides was exhaustive, the reports clear, informative, and passionate. In the next hour concerns included using a cell phone in a meeting, risk to individuals’ anonymity, what will a newcomer think, reaching out the hand of A.A. At the close of the lively discussion, open-mindedness and compromise prevailed in the form of two motions: 1. That the group admit J. via Skype without video and without J.’s participation, and the service
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Dear Alkie

Dear Alkie: With all your sobriety, do you still call your sponsor?
Alkie: My sponsor is someone I call to question my answers.

Dear Alkie: I’m thinking about joining A.A.--what will it cost me?
Alkie: Everything in A.A. is free. The only things you pay for are the suggestions you don’t take.

Dear Alkie: Why do I need a sponsor? Doesn’t your Big Book have a chapter which tells you “How It Works”?
Alkie: The Big Book outlines How It Works, but I needed a sponsor to show me how to work it.

Dear Alkie: I’m new to A.A. Will I someday sponsor other people?
Alkie: Those who work with others evidence their generosity of spirit; those who don’t are cheating themselves of the most rewarding aspect of the program

Dear Alkie: Are there any rules to sponsorship?
Alkie: “Help others if you can; and if you can’t, at least don’t do any harm.” The Hippocratic oath also pertains to sponsorship.

Dear Alkie: I’m new to A.A., and just got a sponsor. Now what?
Alkie: Your mind is not your friend, so run your ideas by one who is--- your sponsor!

Dear Alkie: My program isn’t working. How do you do it so well?
Alkie: If your program isn’t working, try A.A.’s.

Dear Alkie: I don’t believe that God will help me--what should I do?
Alkie: Feed your faith and your doubts will starve.

ANNIVERSARIES

Groups: email birthdays to newsletter@asrsq.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. August anniversaries appear in September.

63RD AVENUE

July
Skyway Bob 34 years
John S. 30 years
August
Jan F. 36 years

ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

June
Joe G 30 years
Mark H. 26 years
Louise C. 18 years
Karin S. 11 years
Matthew S. 7 years

July
Scott J. 16 years
Mark T. 15 years
Jeanine F. 13 years
Fran C. 11 years
Michael T. 9 years

August
Jaime C. 12 years
Mike A. 8 years
Ken H 6 years
Jay W. 1 year

BEE RIDGE EAST

August
Mark S. 23 years
Jim M. 6 years

EARLY BIG BOOK

August
Dwight B. 39 years
Joyce C. 15 years
Laureen C. 2 years

FRIENDS OF THE PELICAN

August
Joe R. 13 years
Peggy P. 5 years
Carolyn B. 1 year

FROM THE HEART

August
Cyndy C. 20 years
Hillary G. 17 years
Janice C. 4 years
Debora B. 1 year

GULF GATE NOON

August
Judy M. 6 years
Henry 4 years
Douglas 2 years
Patti 2 years

HAPPY COOKIE HOUR

July
Bob G. 26 years
Eric 24 years

August
David S. 33 years
Parris 26 years
Delores G. 24 years
Bob C. 14 years
Molly 13 years
Lisa F. 12 years
John H. 3 years
Jay W. 1 year
John G. 1 year

LWR 12&12

July
Bob G. 32 years
Jim C. 6 years
August
DeAnn K. 10 years
Rebecca Z. 4 years

LUNCH BUNCH

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

OAK STREET

August
Bob R. 33 years
Frank G. 30 years
Veronica G. 27 years
Linda W. 25 years
Pem W. 12 years
Joan H. 10 years
Mike P. 10 years

PRIMARY PORPOISE

August
Bruce R. 33 years
Ken F. 5 years

NEW YEAR'S EVE EVENT

The Events Committee requests input as to suggestions for the New Year's Eve event to be held on Tues., Dec. 31. Possible venues are Faith Church and Mennonite Church. The evening will start with a speaker; food and fellowship to follow. If you have suggestions, contact Events Committee Chair Tom M. at cutoptom@verizon.net or 941-773-1938. Please attend the next Events Committee Meeting at 7 p.m., Wednesday, September 18th at Central Office (use back door).

SERENITY

August
Roger W. 27 years
Deb R. 15 years
Ted S. 7 years
Phil H. 1 year

SOBER LIVING

August
Ron A. 10 years

ST. ARMAND'S NOON

August
Erwin B. 29 years
Brian L. 19 years
Loretta B. 5 years
Sue S. 1 year

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be provided by a willing knowledgeable group member for the next 3 months. (Passed 9-4) 2. That when Skyping we announce it at the beginning of the meeting so attendees who are uncomfortable with this can leave. (Passed 11-2)

The fallout of that controversy did not end with these group conscience decisions. Where most members had stepped back from a hard line, a small minority could not. Those who held fast formed a new meeting based on the format of their old one, on the same night. At least J. will get to join his home group for a couple more months. Maybe one day we'll be able to beam him in, but for the present Skype will have to do.

HELPLINE TOTALS

August 2013

Call count296

BREAKDOWN:

Meeting time/location .166
In lieu of 12 step call17
Actual 12 step calls5
Al-Anon Call9
Special Needs0
Miscellaneous99
Spanish Helpline.....3

Please help the Helpline volunteers by contacting Central Office at (941)351-4818 to put your name on the 12-step call list.

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@asrsq.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 Intergruop or the Central Office, located at #B-2, 1748 Independence Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34234. Phone 941.351.4818.