



Sara-Mana Intergroup

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

On the web at 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.

November 2013

Central Office (941-351-4818)

Sara-Mana District 4, Area 15

The Promises coming true

It says in chapter four of the Big Book that if, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely, or if when drinking, you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably alcoholic.

This was hard for me to face. I thought I was a victim of circumstance, in the wrong place at the wrong time. Now I look back and see this was self justification at it's finest.

I started drinking heavily after high school. I spent most of my 20s in blackouts, in and out of jail. I look at my life then and compare it to a hamster wheel; always running but never going anywhere.

I'm now 30 and just celebrated my two-year anniversary. It's amazing how my life has changed, all thanks to A.A. When I came in I was desperate to change my life. I got a sponsor and started working the steps. I came into A.A. to put down the drink and what I got in return was so much more. I not only got my life back; I got a "design for living" as the Big Book promises. I now sponsor other women, have service commitments which include bringing meetings in to detox facilities and being the intergroup representative for my home group. I have grown mentally and spiritually. Life is good today but life is still life. I still have trials and tribulations but now I can face them head on, not run from them. I now understand what people meant when they told me to just hang in there, the promises will start coming true. As much as they have, I could have never imagined it could be this good. I am so grateful for this program, my higher power, my sponsor, and my AA family. With these, I have turned my life around and I never want to turn back.

By Kristin W.

A full, thankful heart on Thanksgiving

The first time I drank was Thanksgiving 1963 and I blacked out. I was nine years old. Because my family members were mourning the recent death of JFK — and were drunk themselves — no one noticed my condition until I was up all night with "the flu." I spent five days in bed garnering undeserved attention and pampering.

As soon as I hit my teen years, regular drinking and many blackouts became the norm for me. Somehow, I kept up that behavior 30 more years until, thanks to a loving husband and determined friends, I entered treatment and had my first taste of sobriety.

Life improved. Health, self-

esteem, taste buds, sense of humor, parts of my brain and my personality all returned. With the help of an amazing sponsor, I learned to love A.A. to utilize the Steps and even to like myself again.

After 18 months I stopped prioritizing meetings. I took credit for my miraculous recovery and started collecting resentments. I relapsed—on Thanksgiving! I had never heard of A.A.'s "Bermuda Triangle of Holidays" until I fell prey to the stresses of Thanksgiving, Christmas/Hanukkah and New Years. Fortunately to come back to the program quickly, I no longer take credit for my recovery or for being saved. Twice.

Ironically, Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday but it will always be a huge reminder of the toll that my disease will exact if I am not vigilant. I've learned that the enemies of my sobriety are missing meetings, isolation, resentments, and my ego. I can no longer afford to collect "hurts" if I am to maintain my physical and emotional sobriety.

Breathing, praying, my gratitude list, starting my day over, saying what I mean without being mean, helping others and accepting help all add up to a healthy, happy sober existence.

Today, I do not need alcohol to quiet my fears. I have my Higher Power as well as the tools and fellowship of A.A. to shield me against my disease and my character defects.

Now, when I have the flu, it's actually the flu!

Wishing you a sober Thanksgiving brimming with gratitude!

by Pat P.

Lucia's Gems from Middle America

I'm just back from a relaxing, rewarding driving trip to Middle America, and am savoring connections (and re-connections) with A.A. meetings in far-flung spots. Above and beyond the serenity and shared experience, strength and hope, I came home with a few gems that are variations on the words of wisdom we use here.

From Storm Lake, Iowa (at a meeting emphasizing our "program of action") - "I can stand at the back of a chicken house and watch chickens for an hour every day for 90 days. At the end of the 90 days I'll know a lot about chickens, but I won't be one."

From Clayton, Georgia, a kinder, gentler way to say "no cross talk" is "We ask that when you share, you share with the entire group, instead of just one person."

Lucia T.

She's living the program, not just working it

I don't know when it happened, but it did.

After years of trying to control everything, I found comfort in those five everyday, ordinary words – “I'm going to be okay.”

My sponsor said it would happen. A.A. told me to keep coming back until the miracle happened. How did I know that a word as simple as “okay” was miraculous?

Okay meant mediocre, run of the mill, nothing special. As an alcoholic, I was anything but okay – I was big time, everything special; mediocrity was my enemy.

My sponsor took my hand and led me (actually, dragged me) through the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. I wasn't an average drunk. I was an awesome alcoholic! We worked the 12 steps. She was phenomenal – patient, strong and demanding I maintain my commitment. Next thing I knew, I was involved in service and then asked to be a sponsor.

Through working with other women and serving my home group as its GSR, I learned a great deal about myself. My character defects reared their ugly heads and my sponsor reminded me to consult my Higher Power. Oh, yeah...that's how this works.

Learning to believe in a Higher Power allowed me the opportunity to identify my defects of character; I had for years relied on them for survival. Working in the service of A.A. and with sponsees taught me how to truly give, be patience, tolerant and compassionate. Things I thought I had, but realized weren't demonstrated through my actions.

Then one day it happened. I sat on the sofa in my den, took a deep breath, and said aloud, “Everything's going to be okay and so am I.” At that moment, I was living the program, not just working it.

By Kip C.

Get your newsletter on line each month by emailing your request to secretary@asrq.org.

YOU need to know this

THIRD LEGACY MEN'S GROUP at 7 p.m. on Tuesday has MOVED to Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, 7461 Prospect Road, Sarasota.

HAPPY COOKIE HOUR, which had planned a move, temporarily CONTINUES TO MEET Monday through Friday at 5:30 p.m. at the Disabled American Veterans facility, 2445 Fruitville Road, Sarasota.

SUNRISE GROUP has MOVED and now meets at 7 a.m. at Bahia Vista Menonite Church, 4041 Bahia Vista in Sarasota. Monday thru Saturday meetings are in Room 11 on west side of the building. Sunday meetings are in the rear pavilion.

PARRISH 11th STEP MEDITATION is a NEW OPEN MEETING that meets Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at St Francis Cabrini, 12001 69th St. E., Parrish, FL 34219. The meeting is held in CHARLIE'S HOUSE.

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

SOBRIETY GROUP continues to meet at 7 p.m. on Fridays at Congregational United Church of Christ, located at 3700 26th Street West in Bradenton. The September 2013 *Where and When* incorrectly listed 26th AVENUE West.

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.

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.

For up-to-date changes please check the website Where & When at asrq.org. Click on the meeting tab at the top of the page.



3 for November

Step 11

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Tradition 11

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal ano-

nymity at the level of press, radio, and films.

Concept 11

The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.

She shed her orange jump suit and now shares the A.A. message

Not long ago, wearing a particularly unflattering orange jumpsuit and an even less attractive scowl on my face, I sat in the first meeting of the Women's Recovery Pod in Sara-

Go directly to jail!



Wanted: Women with one year of sobriety to take meetings into the recovery pod at Sarasota County Jail at 7:30 a.m. Pick the morning of the week that suits you best. Visit the District 4 web site at aasrq.org and click on General Service H & I Committee to get the mailing address information and to download the application.



Have a blessed and sober Thanksgiving!

sota County Jail. From then on, twice a day, my fellow inmates and I would gather in the cellblock "day room" to listen to women A.A.s share with us their experience, strength and hope.

In those early days, there weren't a lot of women approved to volunteer to bring in meetings, so those who could came several times a week to make sure that the seat set aside for our chairperson was never empty.

For awhile, I sat as far away as I could, head down, mouth and fists clenched shut in defiance. But after a few months I came to realize that the freedom these women A.A.s spoke of was not the ability to walk freely out of those big metal doors, but the far greater freedom offered by walking through the doors of A. A.

This was the start of my recovery from alcoholism using the Twelve Steps of A.A. Now sober three years and counting, I still attend these cellblock meetings, only now I am privileged, as a former inmate, to carry the message of freedom to the women in the pod. Because of the service of those who came before me, my life in A.A. is second to none, and I feel blessed to follow their footsteps every week through those big metal doors.

By Danni R.

A GRAPEVINE

Quote of the Day

"This process of identification and transmission has gone on and on. The skid rower said he was different. Even more loudly the socialite (or Park Avenue stumble bum) said the same -- so did the arts and the professions, the rich, the poor, the religious, the agnostics, the Indians and the Eskimos, the veterans and the prisoners.

"But nowadays all of these, and legions more, soberly talk about how very much alike all of us alcoholics are when we all admit that the chips are finally down; when we see that it is really a question of do or die in our worldwide Fellowship of 'the common suffering and the common deliverance.'"

Dear Alkie

Dear Alkie: When did you quit drinking?

Alkie: I quit when drinking became a full time job, a horrible full time job. It was boring. I had to do it every day; the pay was terrible it was killing me and I couldn't quit!

Dear Alkie: I drink when I have problems. What's wrong with that?

Alkie: I never had a problem that was as bad as my alcoholic solution.

Dear Alkie: I'm afraid that not drinking will be really dull. Is it?

Alkie: I often confused agitation for excitement, which is why I feared sobriety would be dull.

Dear Alkie: Didn't alcohol relax you?

Alkie: When alcohol worked it got me out of my head and made me less self-conscious. When it turned on me it got into my head and made me totally self-obsessed.

Dear Alkie: I have good times when I drink. Didn't you?

Alkie: Drinking was a hell of a good time until the good times disappeared; then it was just hell.

Dear Alkie: How can I hang with my friends if I'm not drinking? What did you do?

Alkie: When I was drinking I wanted to fit in and stand out at the same time. I didn't really want friends; I wanted a fan club!

Dear Alkie: I've heard that there are a lot of famous alcoholics. What were they famous for?

Alkie: Alcoholics are famous for two things--self employment and one car accidents!

Dear Alkie: What are active alcoholics like?

Alkie: An active alcoholic is someone who refuses to give up a life of failure without a fight.

Dear Alkie: What kind of a person were you when you were drinking? Did you change over time?

Alkie: I went from a person who needed adult supervision to one who needed divine intervention!

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. October anniversaries appear in November.

ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT October

Ron E. 33 years
Ginny F. 30 years
Mark A. 30 years
Monique J. 27 years
Tom G. 15 years
John C. 14 years
Don B. 9 years

BAY September

Greg M. 19 years
Rhonda G. 8 years
Joe M. 3 years
Marty 2 years
October
Tony T. 32 years
Joe D. 20 years
Jeff S. 15 years
Kathy F. 9 years
Britton 5 years
Claude H. 5 years
Jonathon E. 4 years

BEE RIDGE EAST October

Dave T. 28 years
Bill M. 1 year

DONUT HOUR October

Maureen B. 10 years
Sheila C. 6 years
Gary S. 4 years
David P. 2 years
Jimmy O.K. 2 years
Valerie W. 2 years

EARLY BIG BOOK October

Dave 28 years
Jean S. 28 years
Linda K. 20 years
John W. 7 years
Jacqueline O. 5 years
Cheryl N. 5 years

FRIENDS OF THE PELICAN October

Barb B. 39 years
Leslie R. 30 years
Erika V. 24 years
Christie J. 5 years

GULF GATE NOON October

Mark 5 years
Olivia 1 year

LAKWOOD RANCH 12&12 October

Lester G. 3 years

PRIMARY PORPOISE October

Lucia T. 57 years
Clark W. 7 years

REMEMBER WHEN October

Jack S. 41 years
Lynne R. 24 years
Crismas C. 7 years
Chris D. 3 years
Mike V. 2 years

ST. ARMAND'S October

Lucia T. 57 years
Lucia B. 33 years
Leslie F. 30 years
Ken J. 24 years
Clark W. 7 years
Julie 5 years
Joe I. 3 years

SERENITY October

Vince R. 33 years
Marcie J. 29 years
Tom R. 24 years
Debbie C. 4 years

SOBER LIVING October

Kathy J. 27 years
Tanna T. 1 year

SINGLENES OF PURPOSE September

Leroy 29 years
Cindy K. 22 years
Peder J. 7 years

SUNRISE October

Cheryl W. 5 years
Nelson T. 4 years
Bob W. 2 years
Joseph S. 2 years
Paul E. 2 years

THIRD LEGACY MEN'S September

Rafael P. 22 years

UNDER THE RAINBOW October

Liz S. 14 years

A GRAPEVINE

Quote of the Day

"Many ask 'What is anonymity?' and 'What is humility?' To me, they are almost the same thing. They are devoid of prestige; they demand nothing; they don't ask to be 'right'; they simply suggest that the icy egocentric elements in all of us retire into the background and that we wear the warm cloak of anonymity and humility and therefore, spirituality."

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HELPLINE TOTALS

October 2013

Call count.....190

BREAKDOWN:

Meeting time/location..101

In lieu of 12 step call.....6

Actual 12 step calls.....14

Al-Anon Call.....23

Special Needs.....3

Miscellaneous.....43

Spanish Helpline 2

If you'd like to be a Helpline volunteer, 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.