



# SARA-MANA INTERGROUP NEWSLETTER

April 2019

Central Office 941.351.4818

AA HELPLINE 941.951.6810

aasrq.org

## Don't Be Afraid to Come Back!

-- Maribeth D.



Let me tell you about my friend "Ben". Ben was a tavern owner for many years. He had the perfect alcoholic job! Since he made his livelihood selling booze, he was a happy camper for a while. But then, like many of us, he lost everything.

Another thing Ben lost track of was his number of relapses. He did, however, remember how many half way houses he had lived in before he finally got the program. The total was 13! He would get settled in, drink, get asked to leave, and then start the cycle all over again. This process took years of his life and frequently rendered him homeless. When I met Ben, he had over 20 years sober. I saw a responsible member of society. He was sponsoring other men, and he was enjoying life. When Ben passed away a few years ago, he died of natural causes, not alcoholism. His legacy lives on for me, because I will never forget his 13 half-way houses! I can only imagine the number of people that Ben helped—people who had thought they were hopeless.

Do not be to be ashamed to come back. We love you, and we need you! Helping new-comers as well as retreads does two things for us. It brings us joy, and it keeps us sober. Have you ever considered the fact that your participation in the program actually helps your sponsor?

"Karen" was a friend whom I saw at meetings regularly. She had an advanced degree and held a respectable job. She disappeared from the rooms for a while, then returned full of tears and remorse. She spoke of how embarrassed by her relapse she was.

Do you know what was on my mind the whole time Karen was sharing? My first reaction to seeing her after her long absence was delight, followed immediately by a sense of relief. I couldn't wait to give her a hug and invite her out to coffee. Unfortunately, Karen snuck out before the . . .

*continued on page 2*

## AA Helpline Needs Your Help



Since last month, we've filled nine additional time slots for manning the Sara-Mana Helpline thanks to Intergroup members who have agreed to spend some of their time to ensure the hand of AA is available when someone calls.

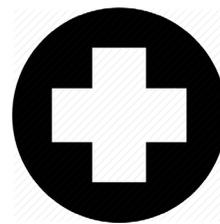
**But we need more volunteers to answer the phones!**

We have 14 of the 42 slots open, so many opportunities for service are available. Shifts are Midnight to 9am, 9am to Noon, Noon to 3pm, 3pm to 6pm, 6pm to 9pm and 9pm to Midnight. If you or your home group would like to be of service and take on one of these positions, you will be providing a valuable service.

For more information or to help, call the Helpline Chairman Chris C. at 941-780-3808 or Central Office at 941-351-4818 and leave us your name, contact number and email address.

## Finding a New Medicine

-- Ross J.



Many of us, me included, self-medicated with alcohol before coming into the rooms. We had problems with anxiety, self-esteem and depression among other issues. Alcohol was our medicine, albeit a poor one. Once we made the decision to stop drinking, all of these other issues did not go away. How did we learn to cope?

Some of us, again including me, sought medical help through talk therapy and medications. Some of us continue to take advantage of these tools, while others are able to live a good life without them, in time. When we first stop drinking, we have no new coping skills to help us to get by. Medications and therapy can help fill that gap. After completing that first big, monster step, we're not yet done.

*continued on page 3*

## Don't Be Afraid!

continued from page 1

meeting ended. She had let shame get the best of her. Don't be a "Karen!" Give yourself the opportunity to reconnect.

And finally, when we do return to the program, we must share our struggles and be thoroughly and rigorously honest! Of course, the intimate details we save for our sponsor's ears (accomplished by a fourth and fifth step as outlined in the literature) but it is beneficial to ourselves and to others to share in a general way what type of problems we may be tackling at the moment.

Since my story is one of devastating loss (the death of 2 of my children) I have the privilege of reminding others that it is possible to stay sober while enduring every mother's worst nightmare. Ben's story was a shining light for the habitually homeless. Your story will help someone too! You can turn your relapse experience into valuable insight for others.

Let me conclude by telling you about my dear "Dana". At the time, we both had about 5 years sober, and I identified very closely with Dana as our stories and backgrounds were very similar. Dana was chairing meetings, sponsoring others, and doing service work at the Central Office. One day I walked into our local recovery club and saw Dana's picture on a table with a candle next to it. She had put a gun to her head.

In tears, I asked a mutual friend, what could have possibly gone wrong? Fear gripped me. "Am I next?" I asked her.

"No way, Maribeth," she replied. "You share your pain at the meetings. You see, Dana was always 'fine' every time someone asked her. She hid herself in service work and never looked at her own issues."



So when you do come back after a relapse, please come back all the way! Get a sponsor, follow the directions, and share your story. Remember, half measures availed us nothing. We will be waiting with open arms.

### The **DELEGATE'S REPORT**

Save the Date

**SATURDAY, JUNE 15**

Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church  
7461 Prospect Rd, Sarasota 34243

Fellowship: 11:00 am

Luncheon: 12:00 pm\*

Delegate Report: 1:00 pm

Shirley P, Delegate for South Florida Area 15, Panel 69 will report on information from the General Service Conference.

\*Potluck: Please bring a dish

All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

This is a great chance to learn about AA and the service structure - you know, the upside-down triangle.

Set up and Breakdown  
Volunteers Needed  
Contact

Mick G. 941.587.0881

Alan T. 917.714.9495

## From My Journal

by Nancy B.



I have suffered with impatience my entire life, and my approach to the 12 Steps my first year in sobriety was no different. I rushed through them. But I found, as the months turned into years of living the AA Program, doing the Steps is a way of life, not an accomplishment. I experience the Steps today as a revelation rather than a task; it is no longer work. With each episode, often many a day, of making choices in the spirit of the Steps, I find peace and harmony, and my new AA way of life is reinforced.

It did take time and patience for living the Steps to become more automatic and less a correction of my habitual missteps. Because there is no expectation of perfection but an acceptance of our human-ness in our vast and strong fellowship, I do not get defensive now when I find I have to change or admit I'm wrong. Rather, I feel gratitude that I received a solution to a dilemma or problem.

So for this alcoholic, living the 12 Steps is like having a map for what has become an ongoing great adventure.

### It Works if You Work It

A Literature Meeting | AMI Women's  
As the First 100 | Bay | Bee Ridge East  
Bradenton YPG | Early Big Book  
Fresh Start | Friends | Friends of the Pelican  
Growing Together | Gulf Gate Noon  
Happy Cookie Hour | Harvest  
Kensington Park | Mon Night Mens  
Primary Porpoise | Rose  
Sat Night Speakers | Serenity Room  
Singleness of Purpose | 63rd Avenue  
Sober Living | Sunrise | Third Legacy  
Twilight Hour | Wed Beginners Men's  
Women in the Solution  
Under the Rainbow

Thanks to all the groups for their participation at last month's Intergroup meeting. It's exciting to see the turnout and the support Intergroup is receiving from so many groups. Any groups interested in being represented, send a home group member to our meeting on the third Tuesday of every month at 7p.m. at Central Office.

Remember: Meetings are open to any member of AA who would like to know more about what Intergroup does and how we function. You don't have to be a group representative to attend the meeting; it is open to ALL.

Jim C.

# New Medince

continued from page 1

We've jumped over the tallest hurdle but there are still eleven more steps to complete. As we progress through the steps, most of us feel a growing confidence and self-respect.

By the time that we have completed step twelve, most of us feel as if we are on an even keel and we're ready to confront life head on, with confidence. We're ready to find new, complementary forms of medicine.

As we really dig into step twelve, we begin to help others as sponsors, as phone tree buddies or in other ways by taking on service commitments - chairing, speaking, visiting jails and institutions, representing our groups to the various committees or writing articles. There are so many paths to service available. A woman in my home group carefully straightens the chairs after every meeting. She does a great job. This is her service commitment. I admire her for this because she doesn't sit on the sidelines. She steps up and performs a service. I have no doubt that she will continue to grow in service as she grows in AA.

As you begin your journey in AA, don't be too ashamed to seek out the medical help that you need. There is no shame in that. But uncover some complementary medicine for yourself by getting involved. It works because the more you're involved with helping others, the less time you have to sit around feeling sorry for yourself, something we alcoholics are often too good at. And the more good that we do for others, the better we can feel about ourselves for having performed this service.

The time and effort that I put into helping others comes directly out of that time that I used to spend pouting and feeling sorry for myself. There is no instant cure for anxiety, depression and lost self-confidence,

but if you put yourself out there with others, if only for a daily check-in phone call, you may find that you can "fake it until you make it"!

### Responsibility Statement

I am responsible,  
when anyone, anywhere,  
reaches out for help,  
I want the hand of AA  
always to be there,  
and for that  
I am responsible.

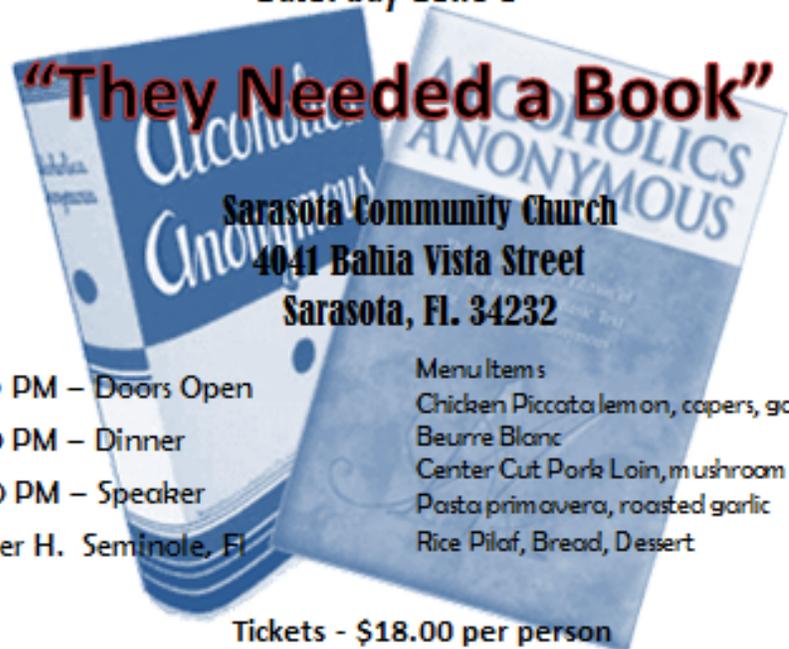


## District 4 Sarasota / Manatee

### Founders Day 2019

### They Needed A Book

Saturday June 8<sup>TH</sup>



**Sarasota Community Church**  
**4041 Bahia Vista Street**  
**Sarasota, FL 34232**

- 5:30 PM – Doors Open
- 6:30 PM – Dinner
- 8:00 PM – Speaker  
Roger H. Seminole, FI

- Menu Items
- Chicken Piccata lemon, capers, garlic
  - Beurre Blanc
  - Center Cut Pork Loin, mushroom gravy
  - Pasta primavera, roasted garlic
  - Rice Pilaf, Bread, Dessert

**Tickets - \$18.00 per person**

**Available at Central Office**

**1748 Independence Blvd. Sarasota, FL**

**For more information or to Volunteer**

**Contact Holly S – [events@aastrq.org](mailto:events@aastrq.org)**

**[www.aastrq.org](http://www.aastrq.org)**



## Service Opportunity

Central Office is looking for a member of the AA community to sit on its Board.

The sobriety requirement to fill the opening is a minimum of 2 years, but it is open to any member of the AA community. Central Office Board meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm at Central Office. If you have a little time on your hands and would like to do some service, we could sure use your help.

Please contact Jim C. ([sarasotajim.flg@gmail.com](mailto:sarasotajim.flg@gmail.com)), Cori F. (727-400-8991) or Mick G. (941-587-0881).

# ANNIVERSARIES

Please email birthdays to [newsletter@AASrq.org](mailto:newsletter@AASrq.org), put **ANNIVERSARIES** in the subject line, and submit them typed in the body of an email or a Word file. Anniversaries appear the month after they occur (ie., April anniversaries will appear in the May edition). Deadline for submission of anniversaries is the 7th of each month. The following anniversaries are for March, unless otherwise noted.

## Bay Group

### January

Don D. 13 years  
 Karen D. 2 years  
 Mike P. 8 years  
 Rick S. 34 years  
 Susan W. 18 years

### February

Carole P. 40 years

## Bee Ridge East

Mark H. 21 years

## Friends

Jack G. 8 years

## Friends of the Pelican

Bob C. 39 years  
 Christine R. 4 years  
 Norris E. 30 years

## Gulf Gate Noon

Cathy 1 year  
 Gina L-W. 26 years  
 Leslie H. 32 years  
 Edgar 34 years

## Happy Cookie Hour

Anthony M. 1 year  
 Lisa E. 4 years  
 Marylin 5 years

## Monday Nite Men's

Chuck D. 31 years  
 James S. 7 years

## Oasis

Duke D. 7 years  
 Mike M. 52 years  
 Mike S. 1 year

## Palmetto

Chris C. 6 years  
 Jim W. 28 years  
 Marco O. 10 years  
 Robyn F. 26 years

## Singleness of Purpose

B.B. 47 years  
 Debbie H. 3 years  
 Jack C. 44 years



*Dear Alkie . . .*

**Is Back Next Month**

**If you're in the neighborhood, check out what our friends from District 3 are up to.**



**Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>**

**5 Speakers**

**5 Minutes Each**

**1:30 PM @ Fellowship Hall**

**Share Some Tacos, Have Some Fun & See What A.A. Is Doing In The Treatment Places In District 3.**



401 N. Lake Howard Drive, Winter Haven  
 Close to McDonald's

*Women of Hope*  
 Please Join Us to Celebrate the Group's  
**33<sup>RD</sup> Anniversary!**  
 on  
**Thursday, April 25**  
*First Baptist Church of Ellenton*  
 Ellenton Gillette Rd  
 North-bound behind Gamble Plantation  
**Potluck + Fellowship @ Noon**  
**Speaker @ 1:00 PM**

**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 placed directly into an email. Include your first name, group and type of item being sent. Deadline is the 7th day of the month. Submissions may be edited for length or content. The opinions expressed herein are those of the writers and not necessarily those of A.A., Sara-Mana Intergroup or the Central Office.