



Sara-Mana Intergroup



PO BOX 3075

OCTOBER 2011

1748 Independence Blvd., #B2, Sarasota, FL 34234. SARA-MANA DISTRICT 4, AREA 15

Walk In Dry Places When Should I Be Grateful?

One spiritual writer believed that our only reason for gratitude should be that we are part of God's universe.

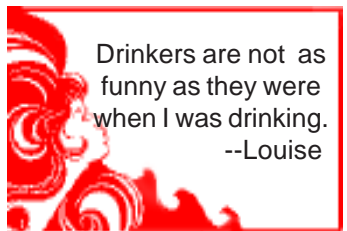
Others point out that gratitude helps us, not God or the other people to whom we are grateful. Their point is that it's not very uplifting simply to tie our gratitude to certain gifts or benefits. Such gratitude is fairly shallow and is almost no more than good manners. As recovering alcoholics, we need more than that.

Cicero, the great Roman statesman and philosopher, said more than 2,000 years ago, "Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others."

The best reason for gratitude among AA members is the outlook it creates as we cultivate it within ourselves. We will actually feel mentally and physically uplifted if we know true gratitude. This is the true spiritual outlook alcoholics seek in the bottle but can find only in the new way of life.

Find ways to practice gratitude today without letting others know what you are doing.

Reprinted with permission of the author, Mel B., from Walk in Dry Places (Hazelden)



Gratitude Dinner—\$14
Thursday, Nov. 17
Sarasota Municipal Auditorium
801 N. Tamiami Tr.
Dinner catered by Troyer's
5:30 Fellowship • 6:30 Dinner • 8 Speaker Lollie B

Advice from Bill Wilson

Dealing with a Drunk in a Meeting

Q. If an alcoholic comes to an A.A. meeting under the influence of alcohol, how do you treat him or handle him during the meeting?

A. Groups will usually run amuck on that sort of question. At first we are likely to say that we are going to be supermen and save every drunk in town. The fact is that a great many of them just don't want to stop. They come, but they interfere very greatly with the meeting. Then, being still rather intolerant, the group will swing way over in the other direction and say, "No drunks around these meetings." We get forcible and put them out of the meeting, saying, "You're welcome here if you're sober." But the general rule in most places is that if a newcomer can

sit quietly in the meeting, without creating an uproar, nobody bothers him. On the other hand, if he's a chronic slipper and interferes with the meetings, we lead him out, on the theory that one man cannot be permitted to hold up the recovery of others.

(Yale Summer School of Alcohol Studies, June 1945; from a talk by Bill Wilson).

Why You Should Attend the Gratitude Dinner

By Eileen H.

Twice a year, we have an opportunity to gather together under one roof to enjoy fellowship and food, to meet new friends and greet old ones, to laugh and talk and celebrate our recovery. During the Summer, we recognize Old Timers who have 25 or more years of sobriety with the Old Timers Dinner. In the Fall, we celebrate how important Gratitude is to our sobriety with the Gratitude Dinner.

These two events offer a rare opportunity to observe the magnitude of the membership in our area, and few go away without feeling humble and grateful to be a part of this wonderful program.

There are many who will purchase tickets, and do so every year. But for those who are new to the program, or anyone who has never experienced the rush of being in the same room with over 500 recovering alcoholics, you should make it a point to attend this year's Gratitude Dinner.

(Continued on page 2)

3 for October

STEP 10

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

TRADITION 10

Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought

never be drawn into public controversy.

CONCEPT 10

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

Journey Through The Steps — 11

A long-time member of our fellowship details her personal recovery through use of the Steps. This is the tenth of her articles.

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.

PRAYING. I have no problem with praying. I say my prayers at night and review my shortcomings and then I discuss them with God. I wake up in the morning and ask God to keep me sober. Then during the day, I occasionally discuss some things with God as they come up.

MEDITATION. That is the hardest part of this step. Like most of us, I have a really busy schedule, and not much time goes into meditation. I know that there are methods of obtaining transcendental bliss, but I have never been one to have a blank mind. I took a martial arts class once, and every time the instructor asked us to meditate before the class, I would think of how stupid I must look in the funny white suit, and I would smile or laugh, causing my instructor to frown. Like most alcoholics, I have a number of voices in my head that just won't shut up. I believe that if I listened to any of those voices, thinking it was God, I'd be up the creek in no time. So I don't meditate, I contemplate.

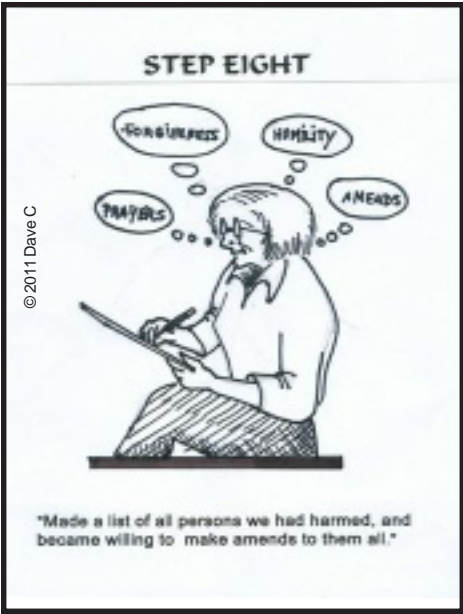
I think about God as an entity that has given each of us and every other creature a life, and I try to see what part I play. I guess you could say that I contemplate life as it is, and my new relationship with it, now that I don't have to drink myself to oblivion. It is a lot to think about, and for my 5-15 minutes of contemplation, I can only grasp a little bit at a time. It's going to take a long time to figure it all out. This is a step for the rest of my life.

2011 Events

Gratitude Dinner
Thursday, Nov. 17, Auditorium

Central Office Open House
Saturday, Dec. 3, Central Office

New Year's Eve Dance
Saturday, Dec. 31, TBA



One of our members, a long-time artist, has volunteered to present in graphic form his personal understanding of the Twelve Steps.

Go to ANY LENGTH

- A** - A.A. saved my life.
- N** - Nothing can be fixed by taking a drink.
- Y** - Yesterday will never happen again; neither will today.
- L** - Learn to share in meetings, both face-to-face and online.
- E** - Energize your spirituality every day through prayer and meditation.
- N** - Nothing better than going to bed at night knowing I did the best I could that day.
- G** - Go to a meeting today!
- T** - Today, as usual, I have a lot to do at work. I need to stay consciously aware that it's not healthy to allow myself to become overwhelmed or obsessed.
- H** - Home group - a bunch of folks who know all about you but still speak to you.

—Mickey A

Lloyd E. Harrison

Lloyd Edward "Wilbur" Harrison, 78, of Sarasota, formerly of Cincinnati, Ohio died Sept. 6, 2011.

Some 300 persons attended the memorial celebration for Lloyd on Saturday, Sept. 17, at First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota. Survivors include brothers Robert, Donald, and Douglas.

A remarkably spiritual man, Lloyd spent 38 years helping alcoholics recover from alcoholism and guiding them to a happy life. His life focused on service to God and others.

Gratitude Dinner

(Continued from page 1)

ner on Thursday, November 17 at the Sarasota Municipal Auditorium, located at 801 North Tamiami Trail. Fellowship starts at 5:30 p.m. and for the next few hours, the room will be charged with energy and excitement as the sound of happy conversation and laughter fills the large, high-ceiling room. Dinner is served by volunteers in the fellowship and will be catered by Troyer's Dutch Heritage. This year they will be serving up a traditional Spaghetti dinner with meat sauce, along with a marinara sauce for those who do not eat meat.

The cost of the dinner is \$14 per person, which includes the meal, beverage and dessert, as well as the cost for renting the hall. The meal is followed by a Speaker Meeting, then by the Sobriety Countdown. Tickets are available now and can be purchased from members at most meetings. You can also pick them up from Central Office. Buying your tickets early helps the Events Committee provide an accurate count to the caterer. This year's theme is "Gratitude + Attitude = Recovery". Please remember that without action, gratitude is just a pleasant emotion. Put your gratitude into action today and make a commitment to join your fellows on November 17 with an attitude of gratitude. You won't regret it!

Who's Counting?

To find out how many days you've been sober, log into www.aahistory.com/days.html

Need HelpLine Chair

Karen K has indicated she will be rotating out of the position of HelpLine chair at the end of the year. Anyone interested in filling that position should contact Central Office at (941) 351 - 4818 for more information.

Calls to the HelpLine

September 2011

Total Calls	257
Meeting Time/Location	190
In Lieu of 12th Step Call	0
Actual 12th Step Call	6
AI-Anon Call	12
Special Needs	1
Miscellaneous	48

How He Learned That Recovery Brought Hope

By Mick G

I came to the AA program through treatment. I knew I had a problem long before. A DWI, PI, and an arrest for possession of a controlled substance were three of the times I was in jail. But like a lot of us, I never put drinking and trouble together.

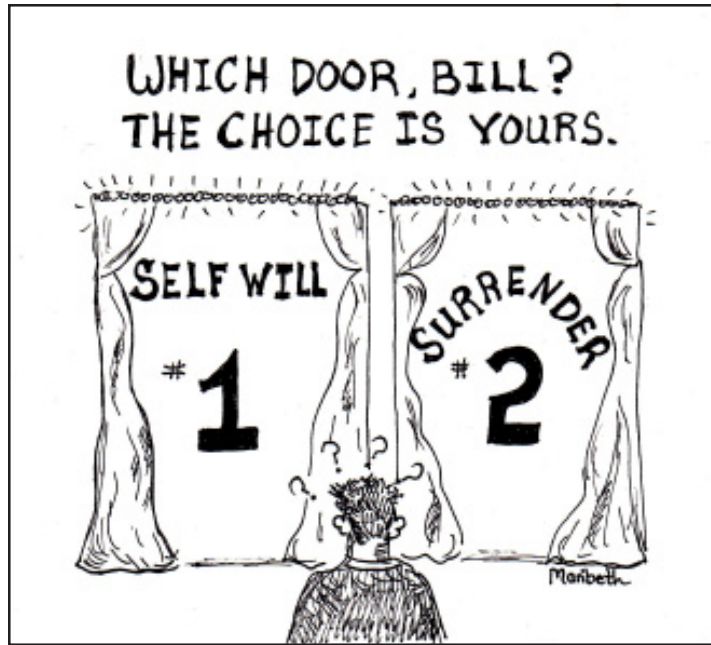
I checked myself into a treatment center I had seen TV ads for. The commercial showed horseback riding, tennis courts, and a swimming pool and a lot of happy smiling people. I thought, "That is exactly what I need . . . a stay at this nice resort and then I could continue to drink like a gentleman."

Needless to say it did not turn out to be a vacation. I was put in a room with a CRAZY man who eventually became a friend. I was given a Big Book and a 12 and 12. That was the first time I had ever seen those two books. I'd thought about calling AA before and even looked up the number in the phone book.

I did my 21 days in treatment and all I can relate that to is putting in a cassette tape and fast forwarding it to the end, then hitting eject.

Once out of the treatment center I went back to work and to my old apartment. I had made some friends at the treatment center and we stayed close for a while. I found a local Lambda club and started in on my 90 & 90. And that turned into more than 90 meetings. How many I don't remember.

I got a sponsor who was a school teacher and used the same teaching techniques to teach me the program and how



it works. I was told to take the cotton out of my ears and stick it in my mouth. And I did. I found a home group, got involved, and my life turned around.

What I got early on was that there was hope for me. These like minded people had found a way to live; I wanted what they had. I did what my sponsor told me to do and I will ALWAYS be grateful to Robert R. for all that he did to shape my early sobriety.

I have learned several important facts along this road to a happy destiny. It is my belief that keeping these in mind always helps me to think right when that may not be the case at any particular time. Among those facts are:

- Sobriety is a gift: so cherish it, nurture it, share it, and respect it.
- Gratitude: have it every day, make a list of what you have to be grateful for.
- God: know that you are not God, know that you will be taken care of, and know that he is always with you.

It seems like yesterday that I got sober and I often feel like a newcomer at a meeting.

I don't know it all and I never will. That phrase "more will be revealed" comes to mind.

Smashing the Ego Was First Step

When I first came into this program I could barely fit my head in the door. That's how big my ego was. Due to my family of origin being alcoholic and dysfunctional and having a stepfather who thought I was never good enough, I grew up being a perfectionist in everything I did. I was even the perfect drunk. I was always right and you were always wrong, that's just the way it worked.

The breakdown of my ego and self-centered way of life started at Step One, and believe me when I say it took an act of God for me to fully take that first step.

By fully and honestly taking each step in order, I was transformed (sometimes slowly, sometimes immediately) into a person who I never knew existed.

I can't tell you that I got rid of my egotistical, self-centered ways but I have the tools today to deal with my character defects and keep my side of the street clean. Admitting I am wrong today gives me power to change for the better. I am a work in progress. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines.

—Dan K

Dear Alkie

"Alkie," one of our long-time members, believes as the Big Book says that we are not a glum lot.

Dear Alkie: Does alcoholic drinking really affect your brain?

Alkie: By the end of my drinking I had only two brain cells left. One manufactured BS and the other bought it.

Dear Alkie: I feel crazy except when I'm drinking, so why should I stop?

Alkie: Thinking you are controlling your own insanity while drinking is truly insane!

Dear Alkie: Will not drinking change my crazy behavior?

Alkie: Alcoholics are usually about 21 seconds from acting on impulse, and when we stop, 21 days from being able to change our behavior.

Dear Alkie: Why do you go to AA?

Alkie: I drank for effect and go to AA for the same reason.

Dear Alkie: I drink to get up the courage to go to work. Without booze I may become unemployed.

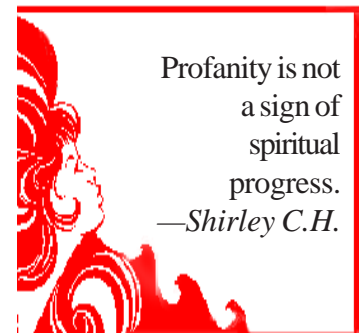
Alkie: Alcoholics are never unemployed; staying sober is a full-time job!

Dear Alkie: I've given up drinking, but am still miserable.

Alkie: An alcoholic who doesn't practice a program is equally miserable with or without alcohol.

The Newsletter Depends Upon Its Friends

Contribute an article!
Newsletter@aaqrq.org



HAPPY A.A. BIRTHDAYS!!

(Groups: Put **ANNIVERSARIES** in the email subject line and send birthday announcements for the most recent month to newsletter@aaqrq.org no later than the last day of the month.

BEE RIDGE EAST

September

Joan H. 32 years
 Greg A. 31 years
 Tom L. 27 years
 Mallory B. 22 years
 Joanne M. 19 years
 Cyndi P. 17 years

DONUT HOUR

September

Joan M. 37 years
 David L. 35 years
 Susan O. 32 years
 John B. 7 years
 David I. 1 year
 Lydia A. 1 year

FRESH START

July

Tom C. 35 years
 Skyway Bob 32 years
 Rick C. 27 years
 Mitch C. 12 years
 Andy 9 years
 Barbara B. 5 years

GULF GATE NOON

September

Jody 27 years

HAPPY COOKIE HOUR

September

Joan McK. 37 years
 David S. 31 years
 Patrick S. 18 years
 Lollie R. 9 years
 Theresa 8 years
 Laura S. 3 years
 Larry M. 2 years
 Tracy C. 1 year

KEEP IT SIMPLE (MENS)

September

Tom T. 27 years
 Ed O. 12 years
 Rob L. 1 year

LWR 12&12

September

Nathan T. 21 years
 Tom S. 18 years

Ron M. 2 years

John W. 1 year

Kristin W. 1 year

LUNCH BUNCH

September

Joan McK. 37 years
 Grateful Eddie 35 years
 Denise F. 19 years
 Lynn M. 13 years
 Maria T. 5 years

NEW FREEDOM GROUP

September

Mark C. 13 years

NEW WOMEN

September

Rosemarie V. 25 years
 Janet T. 21 years
 Susan L. 12 years

NORTH RIVER

September

Dick Mc. 49 years

August

Jan F. 34 years

July

Sam H. 7 years

OAK STREET STEP

September

Joan H. 32 years
 Sue O. 32 years
 MJ R. 23 years
 Johannes V. 21 years
 Paul W. 17 years
 Ronda G. 6 years
 Michael S. 4 years
 Wendy M. 4 years

PALMETTO GROUP

August

Pat M. 39 years
 Buddy 19 years
 Steve H. 5 years
 Richard A. 4 years
 Stew R. 2 years

July

Althea 18 years

Denny 2 years

May

Jim S. 14 years

Sara P. 5 years

SERENITY GROUP

September

Janet T. 21 years
 Wendy M. 4 years
 David S. 1 year

SINGLENESS OF PURPOSE

September

Coleen H. 27 years
 Pedar J. 20 years
 Cindy K. 5 years
 John H. 3 years

SUNRISE

September

Grateful Ed 35 years
 Bill E. 29 years
 Kim K. 29 years
 Nancy W. 29 years
 Marty(John)F. 24 years
 Homer H. 21 years
 Allen M. 2 years
 Dan L. 3 years
 Electra K. 3 years
 Daren W. 2 years
 Jeff M. 2 years

12 PROMISES FOR BEGINNERS

(Source unknown)

1. You will know your full name and address.

2. You will be able to shave yourself, or put on your makeup, whichever pleases you.

3. You will be able to dress and undress yourself.

4. You will know the town, the state, and the country you live in.

5. You will be able to find socks

6. You will be able to smoke without burning yourself, your clothes, or the furniture.

7. You will lose the fear of food.

8. You will be able to walk a straight line and pass the drunk driving test.

9. You will spend less time in the bathroom and be able to brush your teeth without gagging

10. You will lose the fear of police cars.

11. You will be able to answer the door without having to look through the peephole.

12. You will realize what a hell of a mess you were, and thank God for A.A.

SOBRIETY ALLOWS RISK, RECOVERY

Now I understand why the religious people of the past persecuted the artist. Now I understand why so many artists moved away from religion and grew beyond it. The artist is always searching for that which is different, that which cannot be contained or codified; that which is free: Spirituality. As a drinking alcoholic I found it necessary to control my life; control my thoughts and behavior; control each and every situation -- and it was depressingly exhausting. Today sobriety enables me to risk that which is new and different. Sobriety allows me to experiment and take risks in God's world. Sobriety is being free. I am discovering more of me in what yesterday's artists wrote and produced. The "musts" of yesterday have been replaced by the shoulds and needs today. I am free to listen and consider the person because he is a person and not simply because of his credentials.--
Father Leo

If you are a member of AA and live in DISTRICT 4 of South Florida Area 15 (Manatee County & Sarasota County to the Nokomis border) and celebrated or will celebrate 25 years of continuous sobriety in the current year, please let us know. E-Mail your information, name, address, phone number and your Sobriety Date to: oldtimerupdate@aaqrq.org.

HOW TO SUBMIT ITEMS TO THE NEWSLETTER: Anniversaries, articles, and meeting notices may be sent to newsletter@aaqrq.org. Submit material as attachments or placed directly into an email. Include your first name, group, and type of item being sent. **Deadlines: The last day of the month is the absolute deadline for all materials submitted for consideration.** Submissions may be edited for length or content. The opinions expressed herein are those of the writers and not necessarily those of AA, Sara-Mana Intergroup, or the Central Office, which is located at 1748 Independence Blvd., #B2, Sarasota, FL 34234. Email: newsletter@aaqrq.org phone: (941) 351-4818 website: aaqrq.org