



SARA-MANA INTERGROUP NEWSLETTER

September 2019

Central Office 941.351.4818

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aasrq.org

EXPLAINING ALCOHOLISM TO A NON-ALCOHOLIC

Last year my wife found out that there was a chapter in the A.A. big book entitled, "TO WIVES," and she asked to read it. I really don't know why it did not occur to me to share that chapter with her years earlier, but it made sense so I gave her a big book so that she could read it. I have read that chapter many times and I've always wondered about its relevance, as it speaks in the language of a much earlier generation and does not translate well to the way that we speak in the 21st century. I have been steeped in the language and culture of Alcoholics Anonymous and I well understand the language, but how do we make it relevant to someone who is not steeped in our language and culture of recovery?

These thoughts gelled in my mind when I was speaking with the significant other of a fellow alcoholic who was struggling. She didn't understand how he could be struggling after many years of sobriety, and she wanted me to help her understand it. How could a man who had fought hard to gain his sobriety and remained sober for so many years decide that it was alright to pick up a drink? For the first time I thought about how to explain this in such a way that it made sense to

someone who knew virtually nothing of alcoholism and A.A. I knew this woman to be religious and I found a way to put it in language that would speak to her from the viewpoint of her religion.

I explained that I could only tell her what my experience had been and she could decide if it was relevant to her situation and to her significant other. The way that I envision it, I have Lucifer sitting on one shoulder and Gabriel sitting on the other. They are both whispering in my ear. Whom do I hear the loudest? It depends upon which way my head is turned. I hear the loudest from the one closest to my ear at any given time. How do I apply this to my own quest for sobriety? I try to figure out which shoulder Gabriel is sitting on and I try to keep my head turned in that direction.

This is a simple metaphor but I think that it explains this struggle to a non-alcoholic who can't understand why we would choose to poison our bodies, knowing that it was going to hurt us.

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FELLOWSHIP

FOOD

FUN

SOBRIETY COUNTDOWN

RAFFLE

PORK T-LOIN
CHICKEN PARM
OR
VEGGIE
LASAGNA



SARA-MANA INTERGROUP DISTRICT IV

Presents

2019 Gratitude Dinner

Come Join us for A Cornucopia of

"Experience, Strength & Hope!"

Saturday November 16th, 2019

Sarasota Community Church
4041 Bahia Vista Street
Sarasota, FL 34232

NO SMOKING on CHURCH GROUNDS

TICKETS

\$18

AT

CENTRAL

OFFICE

OR

CALL JIM C.

904.322.1869

DOORS OPEN 5:30 PM

DINNER 6:30 PM

SPEAKER: 8:00

More info at aasrq.org

AS WE SEE IT A Secular Meeting

It's probably no surprise that there are folks who approach AA and attend meetings but fail to connect with the program, citing their incompatibility with "the God business" (so to speak). Some have joined and participated in AA (some long ago), despite the God-related stuff. These members put on a brave face because they needed something, and they sensed they could find within AA. Many cherished their connections in AA, despite their discomfort and a sense of estrangement. They found it prudent to keep silent.

However, AA is now home to a fairly large secular movement. This worldwide movement is rapidly growing, and the growth has even reached the Sunshine State. Several Florida towns already have more than one secular AA meeting. In March 2019, a small group of AAs (some with long-term sobriety) saw a listing for a Freethinkers' AA meeting in a neighboring town. After happening upon the idea, we held several group conscience meetings and then decided to start a secular meeting in Sarasota. Twenty-six friends were at its inaugural meeting; it has flourished, with consistent attendance, since.

At the "As We See It" meeting, we strive for an atmosphere of true fellowship, respect and civility. We believe in unity, not in conformity. We read this statement at the start of each meeting:

This secular meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous attempts to maintain a tradition of free expression and to conduct a meeting where we may express any doubts or disbelief we may have. We do not endorse or oppose any form of religion or atheism. We wish to assure suffering alcoholics that they can recover without having to accept anyone's belief or having to deny their own."

Meeting formats vary and include literature, topics, steps, and alternative steps. We discuss how we were able to use the 12 Steps as we saw fit, integrating them in our lives through our own individual and personal interpretations, without conforming to those of others, and without being judged or judging others. We can share our individual take on literature, steps, stories, sponsorship, and the whole recovery experience "As We See It."

Please feel free to join us Wednesdays at 7:00PM at the Sarasota Center of Light.
-- Parris S.

Explaining Alcoholism

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So she asked me if all of us alcoholics are constantly fighting the urge to drink. I told her not at all. Most of us, working a solid program of recovery, rarely have any thoughts about drinking. Not because such thoughts can't occur to us, but because we are constantly working at keeping our head turned towards Gabriel. We are actively seeking the message of recovery.

I shared with her that, even now, my gaze will lock onto a pitcher of beer on a passing waitress's tray but only for a moment. I will immediately catch myself and turn away from it. To me this means that a big key to my own sobriety is constant vigilance. I believe that I have a solid program of recovery but a momentary lapse in vigilance can be my undoing. Knowing that, I remain ever vigilant.

-- Ross J.

Looking for a
Sponsor?
Find a Meeting!



Online at www.aasrq.org

Best of Dear Alkie,

"Alkie" is a long-time member of A.A. His comments are based on his own strength, hope, and experience and are not reflections of any official A.A. position or practice.

Q. Dear Alkie: I feel like I'm a lot different than others. Will the Steps work for me?

Alkie: The Twelve Steps are like adjustable wrenches that fit any nut that walks through the doors of A.A.

Q. Dear Alkie: Do I have to do the Steps?

Alkie: The good news is that the Steps are only a suggestion. The bad news is that the 12 Steps are the only suggestion we have.

Q. Dear Alkie: These Steps you guys suggest are an interesting theory, but what happens if I do them the wrong way?

Alkie: The Steps are only a theory until we put them into practice. The only way to do them wrong is not to do them at all.

Q. Dear Alkie: I just want to go to meetings, I don't want to do your Steps. Will the program still work?

Alkie: The Steps are the Program! The shortest and most important sentence in the Big Book is "It [the Program] works."

Q. Dear Alkie: Did the Steps help you?

Alkie: The Steps brought me from a place of cocksure ignorance to wise uncertainty.

Q. Dear Alkie: And they really work?

Alkie: I am like a bumper car powered by God and kept on track by the Steps so, although I occasionally collide with others, I'm not involved in any fatal crashes.

LÍNEA DE AYUDA
EN ESPAÑOL

941.355.3399
Spanish-language Helpline

ANNIVERSARIES

Please email birthdays to 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., SEPTEMBER anniversaries will appear in the OCTOBER edition). Deadline for submission of anniversaries is the 7th of each month. The following anniversaries are for September unless otherwise noted.

Bee Ridge East

Joanne M. 27 years
Mallory B. 30 years
Neil A. 4 years
Tom D. 31 years
Tom L. 35 years

Monday Night Men's

Dave 2 Years
Gordon G. 3 years
Ian E. 5 years
John H. 23 years
John J. 2 years

Oasis

Jeanne H. 2 years

Palmetto Group

Bobby P. 1 year
Kevin C. 35 years
Sonny 2 years
Yvonne J. 4 years

Saturday Night Speakers

Greg M. 25 years

Singleness of Purpose

Cindy K. 13 years
Jessi K. 1 year
Leroy S. 35 years
Peder J. 28 years
Ross J. 5 years
Yvonne J. 4 years

Sober Living

Kathy B. 4 years
Jim G. 4 years

Serenity Room

August

Brian L. 12 years
Debi R. 21 year
Herb D. 27 years
Matthew C. 1year.
Ted S. 13 years

September

Dave O. 37 years
Robert C. 32 years
Sam G. 1 year
Wendy M. 12 years

GROUP OF THE MONTH

★ THE LUNCH BUNCH ★

Meets Monday-Saturday at 12:00 p.m.
Church of the Cross
3005 S. Tuttle Avenue, Sarasota

Legend has it that years ago the Lunch Bunch's building on Lime Avenue was burned by a disgruntled drunk. But the fire couldn't snuff out the group, and that meeting survived. It had resettled inside a banquet/barroom behind the old Walt's Fish Market on Sixth Street and Washington when I arrived. The space was adorned in red-checked tablecloths, built-in beer kegs, endless folding chairs, cigarette smoke, chatter and laughter.

I blended into that eclectic and wonderful fellowship of white and blue collars, veterans, and retirees, and included a cop, dancer, schoolteacher, beach executive, poet and circus guy. There were Big Book thumpers, stragglers, keepers of the 12 Traditions and practitioners of the 12 Steps.

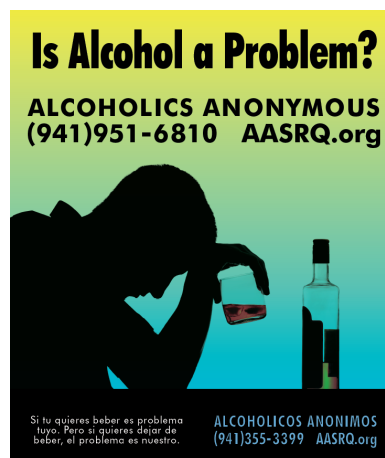
The Lunch Bunch is a meeting that even today provides an hour of safety, respite and sanctuary immersed in the basics and slogans. It is a group united with brotherly love, wisdom, hope, and faith, sharing its experiences of gin mills, tragedy, solutions, triumphs and recovery. And though I heard it quoted years ago, the Lunch Bunch still remains "the best show in town."

The Group of the Month feature is a fun way to build an even greater sense of AA community in our area. If your group would like to be featured as a Sara-Mana Group of the Month, submit 200-300 words and tell us about the group's history, special events, what the group is known for, meeting size, funny stories, how you got your name - really, whatever you'd like to tell us. Send it our way at newsletter@asrq.org and we'll print it!

New Initiative Taking Off

The new awareness program kicked off by the Public Information Committee from General Service is rapidly gaining support by groups and individual AAs throughout the area. Here at the newsletter, we've received a number of photos of these 4-x-6 placards posted at coffee shops, libraries, church halls, and even a bail bondsman's office. Thanks to Dave S. and the folks who posted and snapped the photos, you can check out some of the pictures by accessing the online version of this newsletter at asrq.org.

The idea is to remind the general public that Alcoholics Anonymous is alive and well in our community. It also gives individual members, particularly newer members, an opportunity to be involved in carrying out the 12th Step. If you or your group would like to take part, have your GSR or Intergroup Rep get some at Central Office, or go to Central Office and get some for your group.



ASK SOMEBODY

The opinions expressed herein are those of the writers and not necessarily those of A.A., Sara-Mana Intergroup or the Central Office.