



DISTRICT 4, AREA 15

# Sara-Mana InterGroup Newsletter

March 2024

A.A.'S TWELVE STEPS ARE PRINCIPLES FOR PERSONAL RECOVERY.

### STEP 3

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS ENSURE THE UNITY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

### TRADITION 3

The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

THE TWELVE CONCEPTS FOR WORLD SERVICE PROVIDE A GROUP OF RELATED PRINCIPLES TO HELP ENSURE THAT VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF A.A.'S SERVICE STRUCTURE REMAIN RESPONSIVE AND RESPONSIBLE TO THOSE THEY SERVE.

### CONCEPT 3

To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A.—the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives—with a traditional "Right of Decision."

## Interview with a Longtimer

**What is your name?** Jim M.

**What is your sobriety date?** January 31, 1964

**In what City or Town did you first get sober?**

Cleveland, Ohio. My first meeting was at Charity Hospital on a Friday Night. I was 25. It was a speaker meeting. Sister Ignatia had a sober ward called Rosary Hall at the hospital. Initially, it was men only. She had a policy allowing AA members to come and visit patients at Rosary Hall, but she didn't allow family members or anyone from the courts to come. Most of the speaker meetings were open meetings.

**What was the name of your first home group?**

Lakewood Armory. It was a speaker meeting. Ninety-five percent of the meetings in Cleveland in those days were speaker meetings.

*Continued inside*

Come and learn about Intergroup and enjoy some fellowship along with **FREE PIZZA!** Join us at 6pm on the third Tuesday of February, May, August, and October, 2024!



### SARA-MANA CENTRAL OFFICE

1748 Independence Boulevard  
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941-351-4818  
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### HOURS:

Monday-Thursday, 9am-4pm  
Closed: Fridays, Weekends, & Holidays

**24 HOUR HELPLINE 941-351-6810**

**ENGLISH: Press 1 SPANISH: Press 2**



Meeting Guide App

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## Interview with a Longtimer

*Continued from front page*

### What were meetings like when you first got sober?

All smoking meetings, even in the hospital!

### How long did it take before you got a sponsor?

I met my sponsor on the first night of my first meeting. Jimmy M was my first sponsor.

### Did you stay after your first meeting or did you go out and do more research?

I stayed sober from the first meeting I attended.

### When did you move to Florida?

I moved here in 1998.

### What was it like to make the adjustment to going to meetings after you moved?

I had some friends here when I moved. I also met a lot of people at Roy's Palm who met on the beach every morning.

### Is AA and the 12-Step world different now than it was then?

I don't think there is anything different about the literature or the institution. There were a lot fewer women when I came into AA, so that has changed. Also,

the format of the meetings has broadened. No smoking meetings were a big change. For insurance purposes, most churches did not want smoking at the meetings. Most of the meetings now are closed meetings except for speaker meetings.

### What other big changes have you seen in AA since you got sober?

There are a lot more meetings. All of the meetings are non-smoking. There are more women in AA. People are coming in at a younger age. However, the message is basically the same. Another big difference is that we used to get a lot of requests for 12 step calls. Now, many people are coming in from the courts, police departments, detox, or inpatients treatment centers.

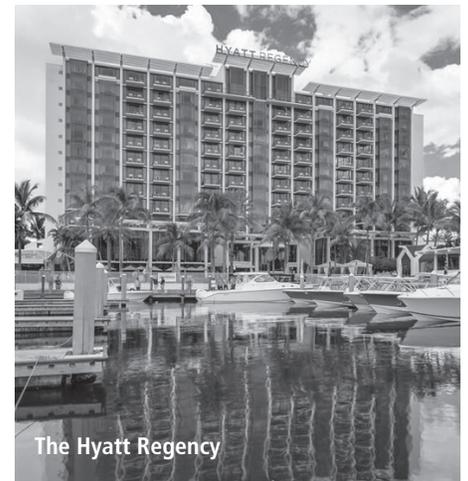
### Is there anything else you'd like to share?

I am a Convention Junkie. My first AA International Convention was at the Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto, Canada. That was in 1965 and Bill Wilson was one of the main speakers.

### Thank you so much for sharing your experience.

## District 4 Hosts Annual Area Assembly

Over the weekend of January 5-7, 2024, District 4 had the honor of hosting the annual Area Assembly at the Sarasota Hyatt Regency. There were nearly 700 attendees representing all 21 Districts in Area 15. Over the course of the weekend, many workshops were presented on a wide variety of topics. There were many wonderful speakers, including our Keynote speaker who came all the way from the GSO in New York. Of course, this took a great deal of work on our part and we are grateful to the many Home groups and volunteers that made this possible, from the organizers to the parking assistants and greeters, and everyone in between. The opportunity to offer 12th Step work was appreciated as always and a good time was had by all.



First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn't work. Next, we decided that hereafter in the drama of life, God was going to be our Director. He is the Principal, we are His agents. He is the Father, and we are His children. Most good ideas are simple and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom.

—Alcoholics Anonymous, page 62.

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## Early Recovery

ON DECEMBER 5, 1999, my stepmother dropped me off to my first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. I was out on bail. I was scared and a very confused 23-year-old adult child. I did not know what direction my life was headed. All I knew was, it was not going in the right direction. I was listening to everyone who shared in the meeting. My mind was just racing.

After the meeting was over, we stood up and held hands and recited the Lord's Prayer. Holding the men's hands to my left and right, I felt a connection that I never felt before. For the first time I can remember, I felt safe. I knew Alcoholics Anonymous was where I belonged.

A week later, I went to a young people's meeting. There were people there of all ages. I felt the urge to share what brought me into the rooms. When I did that, it was like a huge weight lifted off my shoulders. People started sharing their experiences and what brought them into the rooms. I could really identify and relate to what they were saying.

*"If you want, I will give you my name  
and number after the meeting."*

Out of all the people that shared, there was one gentleman that really stuck out for me. I could relate so much to him; it sent chills up and down my spine. When he shared, he said, "If you want, I will give you my name and number after the meeting." After the meeting, we talked and I got his number. I had every intention to call him the next day, but I did not.

The rest of that week, I went to more meetings. At every one, they were talking about the importance of sponsorship. At only a couple of weeks sober, I did not know much of anything, but I did know I needed a sponsor. Despite understanding that, I still did not ask for one. You could say I was full of fear and ignorance.

The following Tuesday, I went to that same young people's meeting. Wouldn't you know, he was there. After the meeting, he came up to me. He asked why I did not call him. Right there, I just asked him to be my sponsor. I did not know it then, but I know it now: that was God doing for me, what I could not do for myself.

I remember it like it was yesterday. He said, "If I am going to be your sponsor, there are things you are going to have to do." He told me I had to go to a meeting every day, call him every day and read two pages out of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous every day. I told him that would not be a problem.

He was my sponsor for exactly one year. In that year he taught me so much. He saved my life. We had a lot of meetings before the meeting and a lot of meetings after the meetings. That is where I really understood that for me, there is no bond like a bond with another drunk in recovery.

John S.



**The District 4 Central Office Fund Drive** runs every year from January 1- April 15. Please be aware that the funding for our Central Office is separate from what is donated by individuals at their regular AA meetings. Donations to Central Office must be made directly. Our Central Office plays a crucial role in the local AA Service Structure, serving as the face and heartbeat of our AA community in Sarasota and Manatee Counties. Contributions to the fund drive enable the Central Office to carry out its important functions and maintain its services for the benefit of those seeking help and information about Alcoholics Anonymous. Please consider supporting these vital functions by making a donation. **You can find envelopes for your contribution available at most meetings and at Central Office, or you can scan the QR image below.**



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*Poor me, poor me,  
pour me another drink.*

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# Anniversaries\*

## January

	YEARS
OASIS GROUP	
Dick B.	34
Carol H.	34

## February

GULF GATE NOON	
Maureen M.	1
Helen Y.	16
OASIS GROUP	
Tracy A.	27
Gil O'b.	33
Jack L.	50
John H.	51
OMD GROUP	
Eddie H.	1
William R.	2
Amy Z.	3
Eddie A.	3
Chris S.	7
Ronald S.	20
Richard H.	38
WED NIGHT BEGINNERS	
MENS GROUP	
Chris P.	1
Jeff K.	40

# Gratitude

“Today, I know what a peaceful heart and a quiet mind is. I know who my people are. I know what love looks like and feels like—to give and receive—and I have a grateful heart. I can match calamity with serenity. I can say THANK YOU, GOD even when it looks and feels like a mess. I can call myself out on my flaws and not beat myself up about them, and just try to do better. This is progress. Today, I win because I made progress spiritually and I didn't bypass my feelings.”

*Nina J.*

*\*As of publication printing date.*

To publish your group members Anniversaries—submit the month and day along with the total number of years, (ex., Mary S. 1/21, 32 years), via email to [newsletter@aasrq.org](mailto:newsletter@aasrq.org)

