



# Newsletter

Vol.3 No.1, Jan. 2019

S A N D H I L L S   I N T E R G R O U P

The **GRATITUDE** Issue

**“Gratitude is a  
currency we can  
mint ourselves,  
and spend  
without fear  
of bankruptcy.”**

Fred De Witt Van Amburgh

SECOND CHANCES – GRATITUDE  
MY WILL AND MY LIFE  
OCEAN – EARLY RISERS – LAST CALL

# 2nd Chances

I was born in March 1949. What I know of Dad's drinking are the bits and pieces he told me and the story I heard him tell at AA meetings we attended together. His AA story of recovery begins the day after he thought he lost his three year old boy in 1953. I was that boy. He had brought me home in a blackout and woke up in his car the next morning not knowing where I was. When he got home my mother told him he had to leave because she could not live with him endangering his family any longer. She told him to go to work but plan on leaving that afternoon. On his way home from work Dad stopped at the AA clubhouse at 4021 Walnut Street in Philadelphia. I know he never had another drink and died sober in 1985. This was 2nd Chance Number One. Because of AA I got to have my Dad in my life for those 32 years.

While Dad was living a sober life and Mom rarely had more to drink than one or two cans of beer, I did grow up in an alcoholic home. My mother was the eldest child in an Irish Catholic family which meant that she took care of her parents in our home or the adjacent house until they died. It's not my place to say that my grandfather was an alcoholic but I witnessed him suffering from delirium tremens (DTs) more than once. He drank every day. My grandmother issued his ration of whiskey and warm beer several times a day. I also saw my mother's siblings drinking heavily at every family function. I'm not judging them. It was the home environment I grew up in. It all seemed perfectly normal. Dad is involved in AA while there was heavy drinking going on every day under the same roof. I picked up my first drink when I was 13 years old. I drank more and more heavily from 1962 until November 1983 when my wife told me she wanted me to leave due to my drinking. That night, drunk again, on the couch in my basement the thought occurred to me – YOU ARE AN ALCOHOLIC! Between 1962 and 1983 I was sure I could control my drinking. Of course I had little or no control but my disease told me I could and the thought I was an alcoholic never occurred. I now believe that thought coming to me in November 1983 was the voice of my higher power. This was 2nd Chance Number Two. My first year of AA was a year of white knuckle not drinking. I was an angry man and those around me knew it. I've since heard Father Martin describe the untreated alcoholic as the person who everybody tip toes around. That was me. While I was going to a lot of meetings and doing service work I was not working the program as outlined in the Big Book. I would talk to Dad often and he would tell me how proud he was of my recovery but I was miserable. Fortunately my higher power brought a person into my life that saw that I needed help. That person became my sponsor and told me I needed to start working the Steps. He was patient and I was miserable. He would laugh it off and tell me again I needed to start working the steps. Finally I did. I remember vividly walking out of his house after doing my 5th step with him. It was several days later that I realized that the obsession to drink had left me. Surrendering to the AA program and working the steps worked. This was 2nd Chance Number Three.

In April 1996 my little brother came to me to tell me he needed help for an addiction problem. I was able to put him in touch with people who could help him. This was 2nd Chance Number Four. My brother was clean and sober for 11 years when he died during an accident at work. I was privileged to help his sponsor put an infinity chip in his coat pocket before we closed his casket. His sponsor, his home group friends and I carried him to his final resting place.

About a year ago I got a late night call from my son's roommate. I would classify the call as a 911. He told me my son was drinking heavily and had been for quite a while. The fear and concern in his voice was evident. At the time this occurred my son was living 1700 miles away in a town where I did not know anyone. My wife and I got in the car and drove out there. When we arrived a couple of days later we found a son who was willing to come with us and we drove him back to North Carolina. By the grace of God he was willing to enter AA and immediately began and completed over 90 meetings in 90 days. He is working a program of recovery and is sober to this day. I view this as 2nd Chance Number Five.

I really don't know why I have been blessed with all of these 2nd chances in my life. I do know that I am grateful to God for the Program of Alcoholics Anonymous with my whole being and hope to remain so for the rest of my life. I am currently working on expanding and understanding my spiritual life because:

***The great fact is just this, and nothing less:*** That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellows and toward God's universe. The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves.

— JOE

# Gratitude

Since getting sober gratitude has become one of the single most important things in my life. Prior to getting sober, I don't think I even really knew what gratitude meant. I'd obviously heard the word, I think so anyway, but I had no understanding of it, I'd never lived in its feeling or used it to gain perspective.

The dictionary says that gratitude = the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.

When I first got sober I wasn't automatically connected to this big feeling that meant I was suddenly thankful for everything in the world. For me it grew over time, some people are naturally more grateful than others too which means that everyone will grow at a different pace.

It started becoming more intertwined with my life when I was advised to start making a gratitude list before I went to bed. I write 20 things that I'm grateful for. 20. 20 is quite a lot of things. When I first started I found I could easily write about 12 and then I really had to dig deep to find the things that I could be grateful for.

Nowadays it's a bit easier, sometimes I find myself just writing and writing.

But even though the gratitude list has been a door into bringing gratitude into my life I now feel gratitude throughout the day, I can see it in everything I do which is a true blessing.

The first thing I now do is thank God for waking me up, something I could never have done before recovery. At different points throughout the day gratitude usually creeps up on me and then I get a wave of thankfulness. Appreciation of life, friends, sobriety, God, my family, being able to gain my degree, nature, music,

having a home, being healthy. The list really is endless.

Then once I began to have those snippets of gratitude I found that my perspective was much much clearer, it gave me the ability to know when I was losing my perspective and going off a little bit mad.

For example, bit of a silly example in my head but you get the point...

If I go outside and I don't take a coat, it starts to rain. I can moan, let it ruin my day, complain about the rain ruining my hair and making me look all damp. OR. I can be thankful that the flowers are getting a drink. There are also places in the world that would love a rainstorm. Sounds silly but it works for me. Another more recovery focused example would be that I can choose to complain about having to go to meetings (I don't usually complain but sometimes I'm tired and a nap seems more important....) I can complain about having to do my meditation and you know, all that stuff that saves my life everyday, OR I can be thankful that I have the opportunity to be alive and happy thanks to the program and those things I do.

If I can find the positives and opportunities to be thankful then everything doesn't seem bad.

— CAITLIN



Overall gratitude = happier, more satisfied life

# My Will and My Life

I grew up in the Pacific Northwest. The city that was my home was a small town when I was a kid. At twelve years old we made a family trip to LA and Disney Land. We drove the family camper down and took a site seeing trip through downtown LA. I had never seen a street evangelist before and was curious about the bearded guy holding a sign and yelling Jesus is coming. When I asked my Mom & Dad what was with him my Dad said, "don't pay any attention to him he's crazy"! My mom said, "no he had received a calling from God".

Having attended a Catholic grade school, I had heard all of the bible stories about people who had been convinced by God to do crazy things; build a big boat in the mountains, take a bunch of people out into the desert for 40 years without supplies etc.

It is no wonder that turning my will and my life over to the care of God scared the living daylight out of me. What if he wanted me to stand on a corner and yell at people?

In 1999 I got the best job I could imagine. It meant moving to New Orleans from Pueblo Co. When I departed Pueblo it was February and Pueblo was in the middle of a blizzard. I drove out of the snow about Santa Fe New Mexico. It only took about a week to forget that the rest of the country was still in winter.

About two years into this Job I was bored on a particular Sunday and mentioned to my wife that we should buy a house and that it should be waterfront property. That way if I was bored, I could drop a line in the water and fish. We decided to go looking and spent that afternoon in Slidell, Louisiana.

We found an older house that was on a bayou. It was built in 1957 and had been featured in one of the home and garden magazines around that time. It had an in ground pool, a boat house, an outdoor cabana, over 200 feet of sea wall water front, a glassed in patio with a full wet bar and about 40 long leaf pines. It was everything I had dreamed of except; it had not been updated since 1957.

I didn't think I wanted to take it on because of the size of the project it represented but my wife was in love with it. We bought it.

When we went to the closing we found that the woman that was selling it had not gone through secession. Her late husband was still on the title so we could not close. I had already bought flood insurance on the place but we could not move into it. It took about a month for her to get her stuff in order and we closed on a Friday. We immediately started



moving our stuff from the house we had been renting and on Sunday evening I brought the last of our stuff.

I immediately started to strip the fake brick off of the walls of the master bed room (my first planned upgrade). On Wednesday night I had gone to bed about 9 pm (I worked early). At about 11 pm my wife woke me to tell me water was coming in the back door.

A tropical depression had blown water back up the bayou and our glassed in patio had water on the floor. There was a twelve inch step from the patio to the main house. In the research I had done I found that the patio would get wet about once a year but that the main house had never seen flood water. I got up and moved all the furniture from the patio into the main house.

My wife woke me up again at about 1:00 am to tell me that water was entering the living room. I got up and watched the weather as the tropical depression continued to fill our bayou. In the end we had 3 feet of water in the living room.

FEMA said that we could build a partition between the patio and the house and live in the patio while the house was being repaired so they would only give us \$150 for temporary living allowance.

We had not had our flood insurance long enough for the contents to be covered. The insurance would only cover 4 feet high because they

claimed that the rest was not ruined by the flood. During the day the contractor would strip out four feet high and that evening I would take it to the ceiling. After the house was bare studs I had to treat the wood with a bleach solution every night to kill the mold. It took three months for the studs to dry out and the inspector to give us the OK to go back together. I did most of the work myself. That allowed us to get the whole house back together with the money the insurance had given us.

The house turned out beautiful and we lived happily in it for three years, then I lost my job. I wasn't worried I was good at what I did and felt I could find another job. After 5 months of diligent looking I had to take a job offer in another state. We were going to have to move out of the nicest house I had ever dreamed of living in.

I put the house for sale on a "for sale by owner" site and got an offer for the full asking price the very first day. I had to move to Kentucky in May leaving my wife to finish the closing details. I wanted to keep my name on the title in case the man failed, I wanted the house back. I tried to sell it on contract but the mortgage company would not let that happen. I tried to let the man assume my mortgage, again they said no, also no to a lease to own plan. Finally, I gave up and the buyer got his own mortgage. He could not close because he could not bind his insurance because of an active storm in the Gulf of Mexico.

It seems that insurance in the Gulf States will not bind as long as there is a storm in the gulf. All summer there was a storm out there. Finally at the end of July there was a day and a half of clear weather and he got his insurance. I got the paid in full from my mortgage company and ten days later Katrina came on shore. A 28 foot wall of water washed through my old neighborhood devastating my old house.

If any of my plans would have worked out I would have been on the hook for that house. If I had not lost my job we would have gone through the terror of what occurred in that area following that storm. Often what seems like a terrible thing to me is only what it takes to get me to do Gods plan. I can't see the plan till years later when I can look back and see the whole picture.

— JOHN R.

# JOIN SANDHILLS INTERGROUP

**Opportunities for Everyone!  
Learn new skills:**

- **Web Design & Email**
- **Telephone Support**
- **Public Outreach**
- **Recorded Speakers**

**We meet at 9am the first Saturday of each  
month at 504 Wilder Ave, Aberdeen.  
All AA'ers Welcome!**

**EMAIL  
SANDHILLSNEWS@GMAIL.COM**

## HOW TO AVOID YOUR GOALS & DREAMS

- (1) Obsess over what others think of you
- (2) Waste time on social media
- (3) Don't Ask for help or support from friends
- (4) Blame Everyone instead of looking within
- (5) Avoid setting an intention for the day
- (6) Spend time with the wrong people
- (7) Don't read books that help you level up
- (8) Live the life that others expect of you,  
instead of a life true to you!
- (9) Be hard on yourself all day, everyday

# Ocean



## MEETING SPOTLIGHT

### Early Risers

As I look at the ocean  
It's like a magic potion

So peaceful and calm  
As I touched with my palm

As the sunrise had risen in the sky  
I thought what it would be like  
without my guy

The sky was clear as could be  
What would he do without me

As I walked closer to the shore  
I'm being selfish because I want more

There are many things I want in my life  
To continue recovery, my recovery, and be that wife

As I walked further, I must go forth  
The sun beat down on me and gave me warmth

As I walked across the beach in the sand  
I saw two children as they ran

They kissed me and hugged me so tight  
Being a mom felt so right

As I curled my toes deep in the sand  
Staying sober, I know I can  
God has given me a second chance  
The waves in sequence began to dance

As the waves became larger and began to roar  
I know I'm not selfish anymore

— COLLEEN G.

The first weekday and Saturday early morning meeting in the area was established on April 23rd, 2010 - a closed discussion meeting called the Early Risers. Early Risers meets every morning Monday through Saturday at 7:30 am at the Wilder building in Aberdeen. The meeting was started by three recovering alcoholics, Howard R, David and Rick B. It has been shared that the meeting began out of a resent ment. One of the founder's wives objected to 8pm meetings as they conflicted with her evening dining schedule. Noon meetings conflicted with the founder's work schedules. The founders were all coming back after relapses so they began Early Risers.

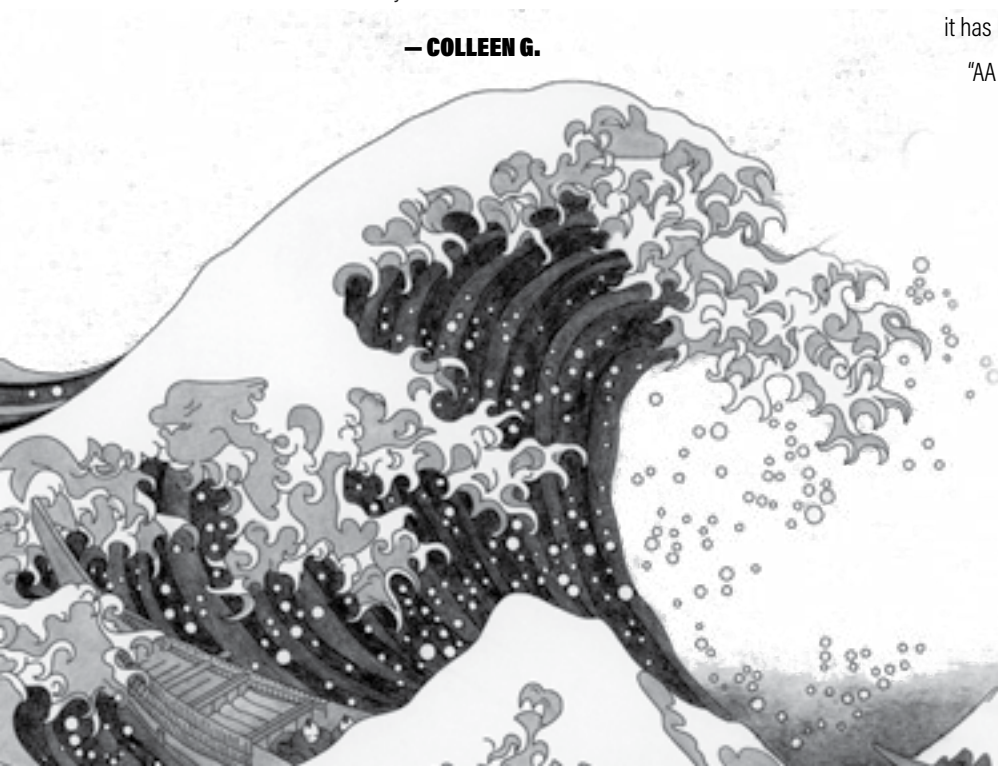
It quickly grew from 3 alcoholics and a Big Book to about 5-6 participants in six weeks and now averages a steady 25 to 30 most mornings. The Early Risers meeting was deliberately constructed as an informal meeting, realizing that some who want to attend have responsibilities that make prompt attendance difficult. One of the main informal "rules" is that whoever arrives late should not apologize - based on the experience of one of the groups founders who attended a meeting in Jersey City, where a latecomer profusely apologized. His sponsor after the meeting pulled him aside and said, "Don't ever apologize again. The only way you could disturb the meeting is to come in banging a drum. And besides, do you think that because you came late, the meeting is that much better than it was before?"

Original founder David has passed away and founder Howard R. passed away this year... Founder Rick B. is carrying the message in Florida.

We are grateful that the regulars at Early Risers for sharing this history.

In the beginning no one thought a meeting at 7:30 am would last, but it has become a bedrock of the Wilder Building. Not an official "AA Group," but for many, Early Risers has become a "home group" and is transforming lives, giving hope and is making a difference for so many in Moore County.

**\* AA MEETING SPOTLIGHT:** Send us your meeting history, news and announcements and we'll feature it in an upcoming newsletter. Please send to: [sandhillsnews@gmail.com](mailto:sandhillsnews@gmail.com).



Every moment of your life is a second chance.

Rick Price

## Last Call

The Long Lotts Bar was my watering hole. Jack was the owner. Jack was his best customer. I may have been the second best customer. I had my alcohol for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

All day long, that was my life. "Something Happened," Jack the owner stop drinking! Rumor has it! WOW! Did Jack go crazy: how could he do that? Rumor has it he turned it over.

Not only the drink. He turned the whole bar over to some recovery AA something!

That was hard for me to accept. I was confused.

Did he surrender to alcoholism? Rigorously and honestly?

Change started to happen. Oh my God, no alcohol was being served after 7:00 pm. What the heck is going on?

All of a sudden people are coming in. People are not indulging in drink. But I noticed they are having fun.

I was coming out of my blackout. I find myself being embraced on the dance floor. It took my mind off the drink for a moment.

Then alcoholism said to me that I wasn't good enough, then I went home. The transaction was still in effect. It was hard for me to accept. That all that alcohol was being discarded.

So I kept going back to help Jack clean out all the alcohol.

### "THE PROMISES"

God was doing for me what I could not do for myself. I was doing service work and didn't even know it. Right before my eyes, seven days a week meeting place. A place of serenity and sobriety. And to this day that place is a 98 bed recovery sober living housing treatment center for men and women.

A couple of years later I discovered AA. I was able to enjoy sobriety dances with my wife and children and that watering hole was my home group.

### DON'T LEAVE BEFORE THE MIRACLE HAPPENS!

**ERSKINE M.**

THERE WILL ALWAYS  
BE A REASON WHY  
YOU MEET PEOPLE.  
EITHER YOU NEED TO  
CHANGE YOUR LIFE,  
OR YOU'RE THE ONE  
THAT'LL CHANGE THEIRS.

# News

## **WANTED: INTERGROUP MEMBERS!** All AA'ers welcome.

We need several people to fill various service positions. Learn new skills and meet new people. ***Service work is vital - help yourself while helping others!***

Please join us, we meet at 9am the first Saturday of each month at **504 Wilder Ave, Aberdeen (The Wilder Building).**

Call (910) 420-0575 for more information.

# Events

## **31st Annual Freedom from Bondage Conference**

March 8, 9 & 10, 2019

Visit **MooreCountyAA.org** for event details, flyers and registration forms

PRACTICING GRATITUDE PROTECTS  
US FROM OUR OWN PETTINESS  
AND SMALLNESS AND KEEPS  
US CENTERED IN THE JOY AND  
ABUNDANCE OF OUR LIFE.  
WHEN STIMULATION PULLS AT  
US AND DISTURBANCE BECKONS  
US, IT IS THE GRATITUDE UTTERED  
FROM OUR LIPS THAT KEEPS  
US STRONGLY ROOTED IN  
CONTENTMENT.

- DEBORAH ADELE

# Sandhills Intergroup

The Sandhills Intergroup is a central office established to aid groups and meetings in Moore County carry the AA message to alcoholics who still suffer.

## ***We provide:***

24 Hour Answering Service - **(910) 420-0575**

Website - **www.MooreCountyAA.org**

## **Newsletter**

*Visit our website and subscribe for **FREE!***

## **Recorded Speakers**

*Visit our website and hear inspiring stories from AA members!*

We are funded solely by the AA groups in our county and we **NEED, ASK** and **THANK YOU** for your contributions and input.

Questions or comments email us at:

**webmaster@moorecountyaa.org**

## **Area 51 | District 52**

**Area 51** represents North Carolina.

**District 52** comprises **Moore, Hoke, Richmond, Lee and Scotland Counties.**

**District 52 website:** [www.aanc52.org](http://www.aanc52.org)

## ***District 52 business meeting schedule:***

February 3, 2019 - 2-4 pm 504 Wilder Ave, Aberdeen

April 7, 2019 - 2-4 pm 504 Wilder Ave, Aberdeen

June 2, 2019 - 2-4 pm 504 Wilder Ave, Aberdeen

**We invite you to submit your story and artwork for inclusion in the newsletter! There are 3 ways to submit --->**

- Submission Dropbox: **504 Wilder Ave, Aberdeen**
- Email: **SandhillsNews@gmail.com**
- Online: **MooreCountyAA.org/newsletter**

**www.MooreCountyAA.org | (910) 420-0575**

*Visit our website for current MEETING SCHEDULE*

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