



# Newsletter

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Vol.4 No.2 May 2020

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

The **SURRENDER** Issue

“Nothing in life is to be feared,  
it is only to be understood.  
Now is the time to understand  
more, so that we may fear less.”

– Marie Curie



FISH STORY | PRISONERS FREED AT LAST | 40 DAYS

AA'ERS STAYING CONNECTED IN MOORE COUNTY | THE GIRL WHO NEVER MET AN ALCOHOLIC

THIS TOO SHALL PASS | MEETING SPOTLIGHT: STEP SISTERS IN RECOVERY

# Fish story

When I quit drinking it took some time for things to start to make sense. I did understand the wisdom of not immediately getting into a relationship and adding that chaos to my confusing life. At about three years sober I felt that I was beginning to get the hang of my new reality. I got into a relationship! I had a girl friend!

We had developed a habit of talking on the phone during my lunch time at work. One day she asked if I could help her. She was doing odd jobs while she looked for something steady. She had agreed to clean out an old man's basement. She asked me if I could come to help her move an aquarium that he told her she could have if she wanted it.

She told me that it was too big for her to move and needed my help. When I got there, she took me to the basement. It was a walkout and had a sliding glass door that opened to a patio. The aquarium had about 6 or 7 inches of green goo in the bottom. It was large enough that I could just get my arms around it.

We found an old plastic pitcher and scooped out enough of the green stuff that I could lift the aquarium. When we had the level down I took the aquarium outside and dumped it in the grass. Something inside the goo was moving. My girlfriend got a hose and started to hose down the algae.

We ended up rinsing off a gold fish. He was a large fish nearly the size of a hand. He was bent into a horseshoe shape from his tail constantly fanning the green goo across his gills. The algae had eaten his eyes and he had sores on his side. I felt so sorry for him. I lifted my foot and shifted my weight to stomp him out of his misery.

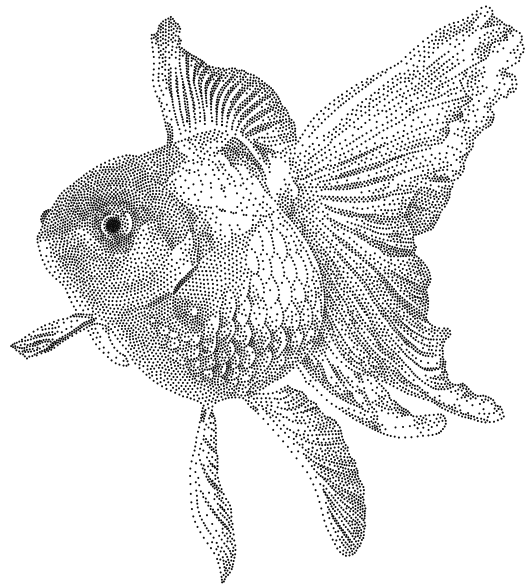
My girlfriend stopped me. "What are you doing?" she yelled. I told her I was putting it out of its misery and she had a fit. "If he lived through that tank he had a right to live," she said and found a bowl. She filled the bowl with water and put the fish in it. She changed the water several times until he was fairly cleaned up.

She took the gold fish to a veterinarian. They gave her some drops to put in his water. They felt they could heal the sores on his side but his eyes were gone forever. The fish had a good life. When it was feeding time we would tap the fishfood box on the side of the tank and he would start to swim in a circle. It was all he could do because of his permanent horseshoe shape. We would sprinkle the food where he was circling and he would get what he needed.

My girlfriend decided that he was lonely and needed a girl friend. She went to Sprouse-Reitz and bought a gold fish for 98 cents. Life changed for all of us. We no longer had to tap on the side of the tank. We would just sprinkle the food into the tank and the small fish would bump the large fish. He would start to swim (in a circle). Then the little fish would bump him until he was circling where the food was dropping. He was still getting what he needed.

One night I came out to the living room and the only light was the light from the aquarium. In the aquarium I saw the old fish floating like a horseshoe with the open side down. The little fish was nestled in the bow his bend created. She was keeping the blind old fish company.

I realized that in my wisdom with my plan to put him out of his misery I would have cheated the old man out of an old life of comfort. God has a plan that I am unable to see from my semi blind perspective. I sometimes think of that fish and feel like, in life, I play the part of the old fish and the people in the AA meetings keep bumping me so that I am circling where I will get what I need. If I am receptive.



# Prisoner, Freed At Last

Shame, guilt, remorse,  
Could I possibly feel any worse?  
Anger, resentment, pain,  
Coursing through my veins.

Prisoner of disease,  
Crawling on my knees.  
Please help me, I mumble,  
In the dark I do stumble.

Looking for the light,  
So far out of sight.  
Feeding my addiction at all cost,  
All hope is lost.

Spiritually bankrupt,  
Feeling completely stuck.  
Unable to hide  
Behind my mountain of false pride.

Pain is so great,  
I begin to suffocate.  
Fear mounting so high,  
I think I might die.

Then a hand reaches out,  
To me, one so full of doubt.  
Saying "why don't you try our way?"  
Just for today.



Shaken, hopeless, and beaten,  
I attended the meeting.  
Inside I found warmth and laughter,  
A sense of being together.

One day, one step at a time,  
Out of the pit I began to climb.  
Trembling along the way,  
Hoping for a new day.



Then the miracle happened,  
The chains were broken.  
Freedom and happiness at last,  
No longer prisoner of the past.

Spiritual connection made,  
No reason to be afraid.  
The amazing gift of sobriety,  
So freely given to me.

For this I will forever be,  
A grateful addict in recovery.  
For all who still suffer,  
Just know you can recover!

- Jodie G.

## B I G B O O K = Believing In God Beats Our Old Knowledge



# AA'ers Staying Connected in Moore County

A recent article in *Psychology Today* noted that recovering alcoholics may be better prepared for the pandemic than the "ordinary" population. Recovering Alcoholics use the 12 steps as tools for an emotional resilient life based on strength, hope and wisdom (the stepping-stones of recovery). The 12 Step program is intended to help people when their lives are unmanageable and when they need to cope during crazy times. These tools arm them to fight this invisible enemy and come out stronger in the days ahead.

What about those who are still struggling? Alcohol sales are skyrocketing in all 50 States. Social media promotes alcohol as a way to cope and survive. People are finding it difficult and don't know what to do during a time when sitting and waiting is all that can be done. Many can't handle the uncomfortable feeling of this new normal life. We Alcoholics have been sitting and waiting for years. And praying and meditating and working the 12 Steps. Waiting for friends and family to reconnect with us, waiting for the peace that comes when we give up our worries to a Higher Power, waiting for another honest sober day to refresh our souls. We've got this!

**Meetings matter!** That's why the Moore County AA community has met the challenge and coordinated over 40 online and phone meetings in less than 2 weeks. The Moore County Intergroup has worked with several AA Groups to help make these meetings accessible to all.

**MooreCountyAA.org** now includes a page dedicated to online meetings (Zoom.us) and phone meetings. **New to Zoom meetings?** A step-by-step tutorial to learn how to connect with Zoom is also available on the homepage of our website. Connections matter, please reach out today by phone or attend one of the more than 40 meetings listed on the site - all you have to do is click on the meeting you want to attend - it's easy.

For the first time in 20 years, the Spring 2020 Intergroup Newsletter will not be printed. The digital format is a safer and better way to reach people, hopefully more of us will be able to read this issue. Please forward this issue to your AA friends in NC and in other places too. **Sharing our experience, strength and hope is lifesaving information to share with everyone.**

- Betsy Y. & Sherri S.

## AA Online Meeting Bingo

Chaotic overlapping small talk before meeting	staring at video of yourself only	Someone in bed	"I'm sorry, but i think you're muted"	"Sorry, I had myself muted!"
abc512_xD (No picture)	"Oh look, that must be a sober home!"	"I don't have my camera on, I look like shit right now."	"Sorry, I'm in my car!"	Serenity Prayer starts: "Uh... God..." "GOD GRANT ME" <silence> "GOD" "CAN YOU OVER HEAR ME?" "God!"
Thumbs up or waving after someone shares because group mute	"This is my first corona meeting."		"Sorry, my house is a mess"	Silent laughing
Clanging background noise	"Can everybody see me?"	Am I chat messaging this person privately or can the whole group see	Someone telling their dog to be quiet	Awkward 7th tradition w/ Venmo handle
Someone eating	Close up of face from nose up	"Sorry my kids are in the background. No school bc corona"	"Um I'm just going to pass. How do I pass?"	80 ppl awkwardly saying "bye"

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# 40 Days

Today we are living in a global Pandemic where "quarantine" is being asked of all people. The Italian word for quarantine as a practice of isolation to prevent the spread of epidemic disease ('quaranta giorni') translates to "forty days". Is 40 days too much time for us to give?

*The number 40 is found in many traditions around the world without any universal explanation for its use. According to the Christian tradition:*

**40 days the Flood lasted**

**40 years the Exodus lasted**

**40 days and 40 nights of fasting for Jesus in the Judean desert**

**40 days was the period from the resurrection of Jesus to his holy ascension**

**40 days is the period for Lent, the days preceding Easter**

*The number '40' is still with us today as a significant number:*

**40 weeks for gestation of a human baby**

**40 days (or six weeks) is a recognized time by experts in many fields for humans to make a significant change in their lives, and to stay with this change (think of quitting smoking, changing dietary habits, quitting drugs & alcohol, learning a new language, etc...)**

**40 winks is a short nap and 40 hours is the standard work week**

**40 is the number for the Tarot card Angel and is a message from your angels reminding you that you are safe, well-protected, and loved**

**In the Bible every time the number 40 appears there is a change**

**40 = 20 + 20. We are living in the year 2020.**

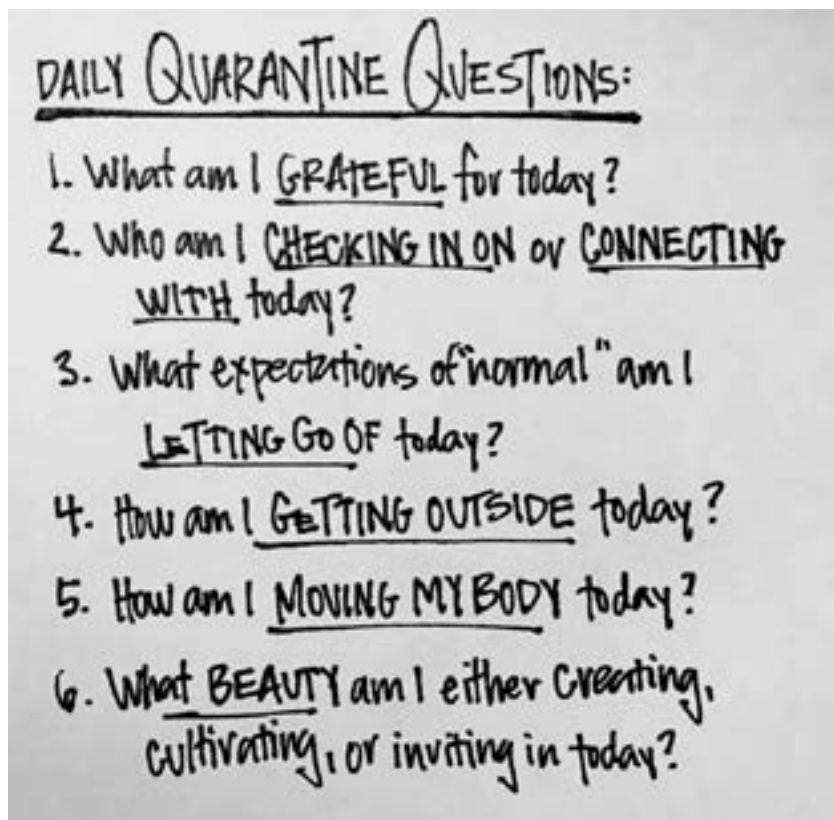
Today the Earth is at rest for the first time in 40, 80 or even 120 years. Smog is lifting, rivers are clearing, vegetation is growing, there is less theft and major crime, and a starry night is visible to all. How can we take advantage of the 40 days that we have been given? Just maybe, we can each adjust our minds to view this 40 day period as a gift from God, a gift of time for each of us to enhance our own spiritual selves.

*- Tinley J. & Betsy Y.*

## "This too shall pass"

If I can endure for this minute  
Whatever is happening to me,  
No matter how heavy my heart is  
Or how dark the moment may be-  
If I can remain calm and quiet  
With all the world crashing about me,  
Secure in the knowledge God loves me  
When everyone else seems to doubt me-  
If I can but keep on believing  
What I know in my heart to be true,  
That darkness will fade with the morning  
And that this will pass away, too-  
Then nothing in life can defeat me  
For as long as this knowledge remains  
I can suffer whatever is happening  
For I know God will break all of the chains  
That are binding me tight in the darkness  
And trying to fill me with fear-  
For there is no night without dawning  
And I know that my morning is near.

*By Helen Steiner Rice*





# The Girl Who Never Met an Alcoholic

One of my old time blogger friends posted an entry many years back entitled "A guy who'd never met a Jew before". As the title suggests it described the breaking down of age old prejudices.

Whenever I think of that it brings to mind the day that I attended my first AA meeting. It was in 1989 and I was "The girl who'd never met an alcoholic". I remember looking around the room and thinking that I had absolutely nothing in common with this strange group of humanity.

I was no longer a child and I, literally, couldn't see where I could gain anything from these "misfits". I had always thought of myself as a liberal, well educated and non-prejudicial person but, as I looked around the room, I remember thinking that this was taking things a bit far !

Thankfully, I had a wise Sponsor who taught me to **LISTEN** and it made all the difference. She suggested that I reach out and try to find the similarities in my fellow members and I decided to give it a try. All of a sudden the world seemed to open up before me. I realized that I had been living in a vacuum...and a boring one at that. I became teachable and the more I listened and opened my heart and my ears the more I learned. Now, after almost 31 years of continual sobriety, I cannot imagine a better way to live.

My friends are an ethnic conglomeration of different races, colors, sexual choices and ideas. They range in age from 17 to 94 and not a day passes that I don't learn something new from them. We share laughter and tears and the knowledge that we will be here for each other as we continue on our journey of sobriety.

Today I feel like I have a metaphorical rainbow that covers and protects me. It is made up of the melding of all these colorful characters ... and to think that I almost let it pass me by!

*- Vass AA member V. Dean*



# Step Sisters in Recovery (SSIR)

The Monday Night Step Sisters in Recovery group meets at 6:00pm in the Pinehurst Village Chapel. This group blossomed out of the weekly Monday night meeting at the Wilder Building by a group of women who believed in the importance of "working the Steps" as an integral part of their Recovery. This group originally met at a Pinehurst shop owned by one of the members. Interest grew in this meeting with more and more old timers and those new to AA showing up each week. The Village Chapel of Pinehurst answered the call, and offered space for the SSIR group, where it still meets to this day. The Village Chapel is one of the oldest interdenominational churches in the U.S.

All AA's know what the 12 Steps are and often read and/or re-read them at every meeting we attend. But to actually do "the work" of reviewing, analyzing and personalizing each Step is what makes true recovery possible. The honest truth is that recovery is a long, ongoing process that doesn't happen overnight or the moment you stop drinking. Working the 12 Steps provides the support and guidance needed to actively engage in your recovery and rebuild your life. This group has in recent years sought out a workbook to help them in their journey: ***The 12 Steps - A Way Out*** by Friends in Recovery. Once the workbook pages are completed, the group starts over again at page 1 to do each chapter step by step. The workbook helps to draw out feelings, memories and positive recovery attitudes and actions. The meeting itself creates a safe haven to express these thoughts and share individual experiences. As one member said, "The meeting gets down to the nitty gritty of the program and it helps me to better understand myself."

Step Sisters attracts women of varying lengths of sobriety and diversity in ages, which adds to its vitality. Both laughter and hugs are commonplace. Newcomers add to the conversation with their unique insights, while those with 10-20-30+ years of sobriety add their own experience, strength and hope. Another group member says, "It's amazing to have these other women to work the Steps with - all with different opinions and stories - with a common purpose of staying sober." Being a group just for women makes it a comforting and true sisterhood for the attendees: "This meeting has proved to me the value of a women's only meeting. In all my years of sobriety I have not found a women's meeting that I was comfortable with and now I have Step Sisters."

During the COVID "stay at home" time, the Step Sisters continues to meet every Monday night at 6pm via phone conference call. This way of communicating has kept the group in contact, while also allowing them to each follow along with the 12 Step workbook. One member takes the role of Leader to move the conversation along, and to call on different members to read intro paragraphs and subsequent questions in each section. Just like in a face-to-face meeting, all members have ample time to share and relate on their experiences with each Step. Hopefully very soon the Step Sisters will be re-united at the Village Chapel in Pinehurst! - ***Betsy Y.***



Pinehurst Village Chapel, 10 Azalea Rd, Pinehurst, NC 28374



Send us your meeting history, news and announcements and we'll feature it in an up-coming newsletter.

Please send to:

***SandhillsNews@gmail.com***

# 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:***

Answering service **(910) 420-0575** - General AA questions and meeting information are provided. In case of an emergency please dial 911.

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.

Visit our website for the current **MEETING SCHEDULE**  
**www.MooreCountyAA.org**

Have a question? Answers are a phone call away (910) 420-0575

**Meditation,  
because  
some  
questions  
can't be  
answered  
by Google.**

# JOIN SANDHILLS INTERGROUP

**Opportunities for Everyone!**  
**Meet people and learn new skills:**

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

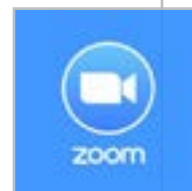
We meet at 9am the first Saturday of each month via Zoom.us

All AA'ers Welcome!

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## ***AA District 52***

*AA District 52 comprises Moore, Hoke, Richmond, Lee and Scotland Counties. Visit their website: **www.aanc52.org***

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