



# Newsletter

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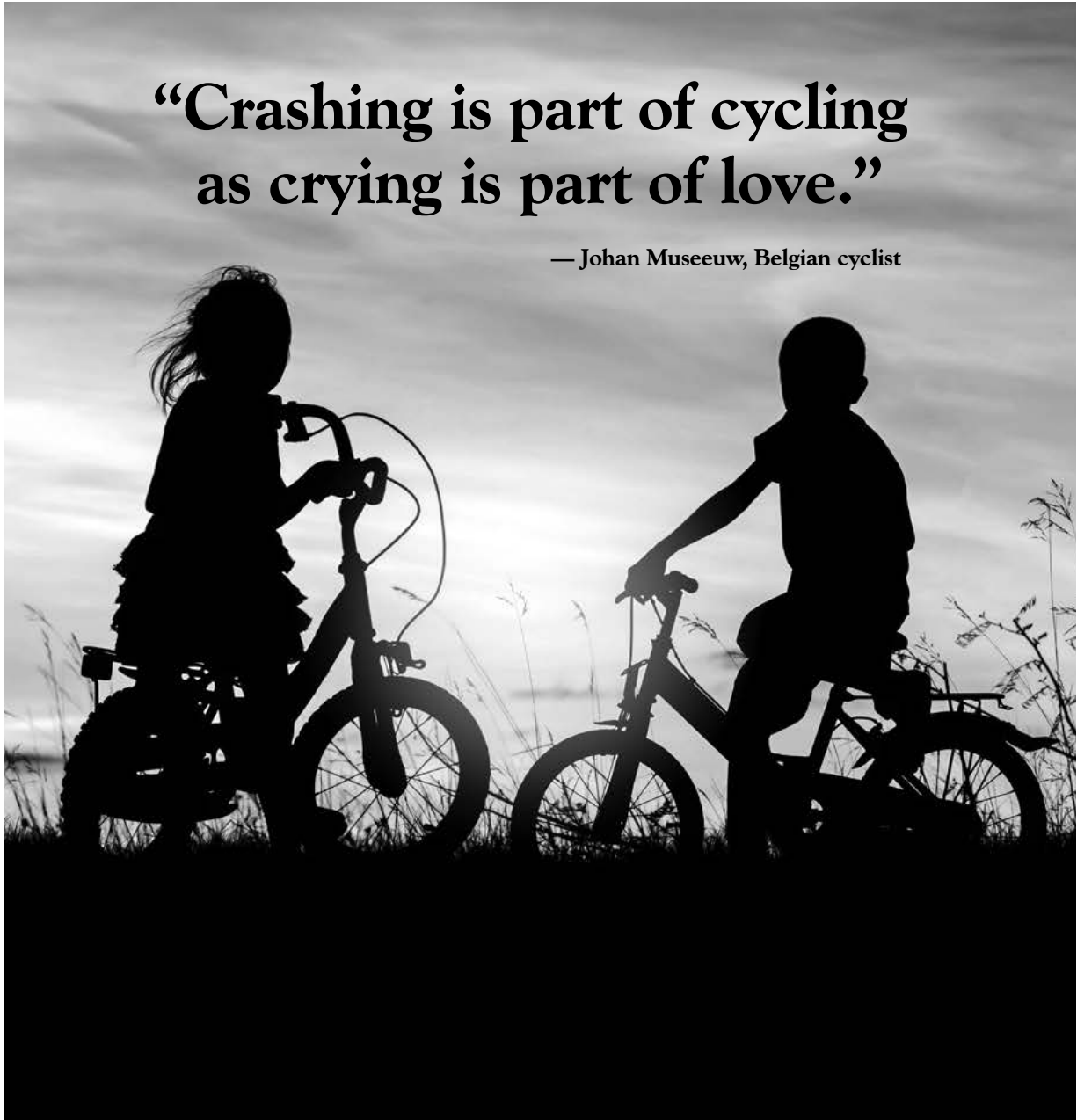
Vol.6 No.2 May 2022

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

The Contemplation Issue

**“Crashing is part of cycling  
as crying is part of love.”**

— Johan Museeuw, Belgian cyclist



OUR JOURNEY THROUGH SOBRIETY, MY BROTHER AND ME | GUY IN THE GLASS

SERVICE WITH THE MOORE COUNTY A.A. HOTLINE

INSPIRATION FROM THE ROOMS | I'M A LIAR, A CHEAT AND A THIEF | BOTTOM

# Our Journey through Sobriety, My Brother and Me

My brother and I could not be more different. He is an artist, sensitive, creative and just a bit on the edge. I am a hard driving A personality that wants always to be in control. He can be introverted, and I am filled with ego. Both of us can engage a stranger at any time or place and have a warm and fun conversation.

Yet we both grew up in a nurturing home with parents that loved each other and all four of us kids. We moved frequently as my dad

was in sales for Corning Glass. I believe we both were challenged by the moves, always made in the middle of the year, always walking into a classroom filled with children who had already established friendships.

We did not grow up in an alcoholic household, although alcohol was served in our home. I remember my first drink as a teen having a rum and tonic as my parents were enjoying their nightly martini while playing cribbage or backgammon. My brother was the "sneak it from

the cabinet, top the bottle off with water" kind of teen. Not sure my parents drank enough in those days to have noticed.

He was born in January of 1951 and I was born in August of 1952. I was the sister who was studious, serious, neurotic and dramatic. They all called me Sarah Bernhardt. My brother was full of rage and angst. Yet he, my sister and my younger brother all bonded into a trio that seldom included me. They were funny, adventurous daredevils, and I was jealous of the way my pretty and talented sister was able to draw them to her.

I am married 44 years with two grown children. My brother married three times but is now single and happy. Still our lives cycled around to the same addiction to alcohol that brought us to AA. In 2009, my sobriety date in January and his in March, we started our journey toward sobriety. His home group was a small group of men at a church. The pastor started the group as he was

recovering from his addiction. My home group was a woman's group of ladies that had decades of sobriety. I did the 90 meetings in 90 days. I became able to attend many different meetings with many different demographics. I had to go to meetings until I wanted to go to meetings. As I have moved to different homes, I have found meetings in my new homes. When my brother moved from the west coast to the east, he did not take his program with him. In fact, he picked up the marijuana maintenance program in Colorado on his way. He struggles with that addiction now.

In June of 2009, my nephew was married in a lavish wedding. My daughter and I flew there and enjoyed the weekend with my mother, my younger brother and his wife, and my older brother. This was our first major event with alcohol since we had gotten sober. I had a ball, laughing and enjoying every minute of the night. It was wonderful to be sober and to be present for the experience with my family. My brother found the situation more challenging. He said, "clearly you don't need alcohol as a social lubricant" and he was so right!!

Many years later, my brother and I headed to Denver, CO to see my daughter and my sister joined us. I took my brother to the Coors House, (the AA clubhouse donated by the Coors family, ironic, yes?) to attend a meeting. It was a huge meeting held every Saturday morning. We identified ourselves as newcomers, and they asked me to be the first to share and my brother to be next. It was awkward at first, but I stepped up to the plate and was able to come up with something to share. I knew my brother was miserable, thinking of what to say. His share was touching, and it was very thoughtful. To his surprise, after the meeting, he was approached by a fellow artist, a kindred soul. His share had touched her. As we walked home, I pointed out that meetings can have that extraordinary power. What a God Shot that he happened to be there saying just what she needed to hear.

The lesson I have learned with my brother through our journey: everyone's journey is different. We all get off the elevator at different floors. Yet we are all broken. We each need to find the journey that keeps us sober. I have found mine through service, fellowship and my higher power. I will always be grateful for the program of AA.

**- Ginger E.**



# Guy in the Glass

When you get what you want in your struggle for self  
And the world makes you king for a day,  
Just go to the mirror and look at yourself  
And see what that man has to say.

For it isn't your father or mother or wife  
Whose judgment upon you must pass.  
The fellow whose verdict counts most in life  
Is the one starting back from the glass.

You may be like Jack Horner and chisel a plum  
And think you're a wonderful guy.  
But the man in the glass says you're only a bum  
If you can't look him straight in the eye.

He's the fellow to please-never mind all the rest,  
For he's with you clear to the end.  
And you've passed your most dangerous, difficult test  
If the man in the glass is your friend.

You may fool the whole world down the pathway of years  
And get pats on the back as you pass.  
But your final reward will be heartache and tears  
If you've cheated the man in the glass.

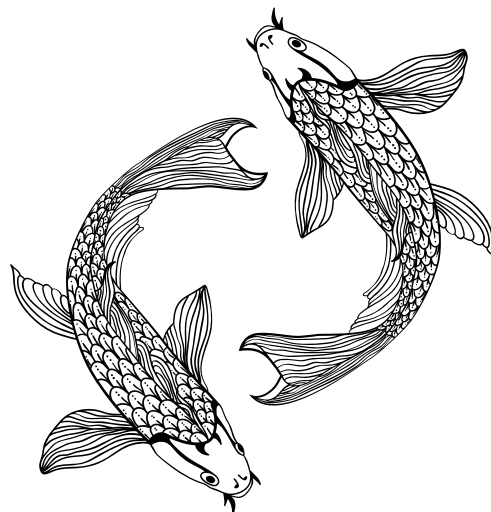
- *Maxie*

The biggest  
communication  
problem is  
we do not listen to  
understand.  
We listen to reply.

Unknown

**In a conversation  
with God  
the other day,  
He asked me,  
“Why do you  
complain about  
what I do with my  
own creation?”**

- Barry P.

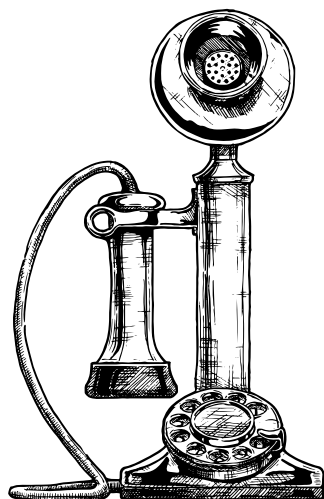


# Service with the Moore County A.A. Hotline

## *How does it work?*

### **What happens when someone calls 910-420-0575? (I almost said "dials," but then you'd have a clue about how old I am ...)**

A member of the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in our area will answer. Now, it's true that, because of the way the system works as maintained by Sandhills Intergroup, he or she might not say "Moore County A.A. – How can I help you?" That's because we don't have a central office where a receptionist can personally answer calls 24-7. (Not many organizations do these days!) But we do have an automated system that handles incoming calls all day, every day – Google Voice.



So, when someone makes a call to our Hotline, this little part of the Google-verse automatically forwards it to one of the numbers registered with the system, and I or another AAer on the list gets the call. Since I can't tell who it's coming from – not likely someone on my contact list, so their name won't appear on my phone – I'll answer like I usually do.

There might be a slight hesitation on the line if the caller was expecting to hear "Moore County Alcoholics

Anonymous ... How can I help you?" But we always figure out who I am and what they need, so the conversation is off and running – or at least walking.

On the rare occasion that no one is available to answer at the time of the call, a pleasant voice says, "The Google subscriber you have called is not available. Please leave a message after the tone." So, we can check our voicemail messages regularly, and return calls from anyone who's left a number.

### **What kinds of calls do we get?**

That was my main concern when I first asked to have my number added to the list. Would I be able to answer the questions I was asked? What if I couldn't? Was there another person or organization I could turn to for assistance ... like a lifeline on Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Well, my experience after about three years "on the job" is that I could provide about 95% of the information and support that people were seeking. Especially since the start of the pandemic, and

the creation – and later suspension – of many Zoom meetings, most of the questions concern when and where a particular meeting would be held, whether it was in-person or online, and in some cases, what was the passcode for an online meeting. The best resource for this kind of information is available on our website: [www.moorecountyyaa.org](http://www.moorecountyyaa.org). Although this directory of more than 50 meetings will always be updating, the folks who maintain that resource do their best to obtain current information about each meeting listed, and to revise the record as soon as there's a change. And since that schedule mirrors the one posted for District 52 at: [www.aanc52.org](http://www.aanc52.org), it includes information not only for Moore County meetings but also those in Hoke, Richmond, Lee and Scotland Counties.

### **Here are a few typical questions, with some of the sources that we turn to for answers:**

#### **"I just moved here, and I was wondering about meetings in the area."**

A referral to the online schedule at the website is a good place to start. If the caller seems a little chatty, I might ask what part of Moore County they live in, and perhaps recommend a particular meeting – maybe even my home group! It's nice to be able to say that the Wilder Buildings hosts several meetings every day of the week, spanning a variety of formats.

#### **"I'm interested in attending a meeting ... How do I sign up?"**

It's also nice to be able to say that there's no admissions procedure! Still, this can be a good opportunity to explain the difference between an Open and a Closed meeting. (This got a bit tricky when a meeting was temporarily "closed" because of COVID, and then "open" again when it was safe to return to in-person meetings. But we worked it out.)

#### **"I'm a nursing student, and one of my course requirements is to attend an A.A. meeting. What do I need to do?"**

We get similar requests from students in fields like psychology and social work, as well as ministers who'd like a fuller understanding of the program to better support their congregations. Again, the online schedule is a good starting point – along with clarifying that distinction between Open and Closed meetings. I always suggest that they arrive a little early and look for someone milling about at the front of the room who might be "in charge," so they can introduce themselves and explain why they've come to the meeting.

**"My mother has been in A.A. for 20 years, but she's in a nursing home now and can't get out to meetings. Can someone give her a call from time to time just to chat?"**

This one – and others like it – requires another step or two, not just a single answer on the phone. While Intergroup doesn't have a comprehensive database with names and numbers of folks willing to make such calls, each of us has developed our own list of women and men who are glad to reach out this way.

**"I've lost my license and really need to get to a meeting. Is there someone who can give me a ride?"**

Even more complicated ... and admittedly a significant request in several ways. Significant for the caller, because it shows a commitment to overcoming a transportation problem to strengthen their recovery, rather than using it as an excuse not to get to a meeting. But significant for the Hotline responder as well, because of (1) the inconvenience involved, and (2) legitimate concerns about safety. This is a judgment call, and we're not expected to do more than make the best choice under the circumstances.

I myself have received only five or six such calls in the past several years, and my responses have varied. Sometimes all I can do is explain that our resources are limited, and we're not really set up to provide transportation. But on other occasions I've sent an email blast to my list of A.A. contacts (men or women, depending on the caller), to see if anyone's able to call the person and make their own honest assessment about whether they can offer a ride.

**Finally**, there are those rare calls when someone needs a level of professional help that's clearly beyond what we can emotionally, ethically, or legally provide. We've compiled a small directory of more suitable substance-abuse and addiction-recovery resources in Moore County, and making a referral is the right thing to do. This is tricky if the call comes at 9:00 at night yet the appropriate office closed at 5:00. But we do what we can. (Recite the Serenity Prayer in such cases.)

### **So, what's next?**

Those of us who answer these calls will attest to how rewarding it can be. I do find satisfaction in knowing that I'm playing a small part in supporting this vital commitment for our area: "When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that, I am responsible." But answering Hotline calls is also a regular way to confirm for myself my identify as an alcoholic. And that is essential for continuing my own recovery.

**If you think you might be interested in this form of service work, please get in touch with us at [moorecountyaa@gmail.com](mailto:moorecountyaa@gmail.com).**

*Bob H., Evergreen Group*

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Alcohol is  
the fakest  
friend  
you'll ever  
have

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## Inspiration From the Rooms

At a recent Moore County AA meeting, the topic was ways that AA'ers actually live a sober, honest life. Many who were present talked about remembering to use the tools that the program had given them to deal with the ups & downs of their daily lives.

"When my 'hair is on fire' and the craziness sets in, I know now that I need to just stop for a moment and BREATHE."

"I need to remember that I have many tools in my AA toolbox to help me deal with everyday struggles. I can go to a meeting, or call my sponsor, or help another AA'er who's struggling, or just sit and reflect on all the things I have to be grateful for today."

"I used to have a 'military mindset' and I said 'NO! I am not going to surrender!'. Then after a while I realized that I only had to surrender to alcohol. And then just keep living. I guess The Promises really have come true for me."

"I'm so grateful for this program – it slowed me down and gave me back my true self."

"When I'm faced with toxic people, I think of the 4th Step Prayer. How do I deal with a person who is behaving in a toxic fashion? I give them loving care, I remember that they are most likely spiritually sick, and I treat them as I would a sick friend."

"Sometimes I say the Serenity Prayer in my head. Not just once or twice – with some situations it may be 20 times before I start to calm down!"

"Meetings are my medicine. I have a disease called alcoholism and it wants to kill me. I need to regularly take this medicine that doesn't come in a bottle or a box. I just need to go to these meetings and sit and listen and absorb the words. And sometimes even share my feelings."

*- Anonymous*

# I'm a Liar, a Cheat and a Thief

When my drinking was out of control, and alcoholism had its thorny hands tight around my neck, I was a liar, a cheat and a thief. I lied to my family about how much I was drinking, and also if I had had a drink. "No!", I'd say. "I'm just tired/overworked/my hormones are out of control...," when actually I did have 2 quick vodka & cranberry drinks before the family arrived home. I lied to my doctor when I said I had 10 drinks in a week (it was really up to 10 drinks a day, or more). I lied to my friend when I said I couldn't meet for lunch (when I was really too hungover to even consider leaving my bed, and blamed it on a "stomach bug").

Every time I drank, I cheated my family from my full attention and caring, motherly love. The lines of good and bad were blurred when I was drinking, and I'm sure I cheated many others by not being a good employee, a devoted church member or even a good friend. In reviewing my alcoholic life, I can now see that the main person I cheated was myself. I cheated myself out of a good self-image; I cheated myself of a good, honest life. I abused my body, my mind and my spirit.

I stole precious family time from my children, like a Christmas Eve I chose to be alone in my bedroom with wine and wrapping presents, rather than spending time with my loved ones downstairs in front of the fire by the Christmas tree. Holidays are difficult for me for a myriad of reasons, but I chose alcohol to numb my feelings and existence, rather than confronting the holiday anxiety head-on. I stole from my boss by taking things from the store without paying for them.

I stole memories from myself and blacked out instead. Remembering the times I lied, cheated and was a thief brings up many raw emotions. I have hatred for the alcoholic I was. Today I am glad that I can share these memories and raw emotions with my Sponsor and in closed AA meetings. I am still ashamed of my past self. After many months of sobriety and soul-searching, I understand I can't change the past, BUT I do have the power to make today, and every day moving forward, a better one, an honest one, and a day worth living. As a recovering alcoholic, I can truly say that I am no longer a Liar, a Cheat or a Thief.

**- Anonymous**

It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities. "How can I best serve Thee—Thy will (not mine) be done." - ***Alcoholics Anonymous, (Into Action) p. 85***

## 8 Pieces of Wisdom that can Change your Life.

1. Overthinking kills happiness.
2. Live for today, not for tomorrow.
3. Words are powerful, use them wisely.
4. Laziness is more work in the long run.
5. Dreams don't work unless you do.
6. What you fear most is usually what you most should do.
7. People come and go but the right ones stay.
8. Never look back, there is nothing there for you.



# Bottom

What about the Newcomers who display an active ego? Do they have a "snowball's" chance to recover? How do they hit bottom? Isn't it impossible for them to surrender when they're still full of themselves? I believe that "hitting bottom" is absolutely essential, and the requirement for hitting bottom is that our egos are completely shattered. If we'd learn from the AA experience, and *apply it*, we'd have far more success with egotistical newcomers. Here are the historical facts:

While William Griffith Wilson was still drinking his head off, Rowland Hazard, in an effort to quit drinking, spent a year with Dr. Carl Jung in Zurich, Switzerland. But he got drunk again. So he went back to Dr. Jung, and this time was shocked to learn that only a spiritual experience could save him from insanity or death. William hit bottom. He later became an Oxford Group member and stayed sober.

But even before William Hazard had sailed for Switzerland, Dr. Robert Holbrook Smith (known affectionately to us as "Dr. Bob") had found the Oxford Group. Yet he didn't hit bottom and kept drinking because he lacked the insight that Bill Wilson would bring him, some two or three years later.

Now what was the difference between Hazard's and Dr. Bob's experience? Well, Hazard's ego was smashed and he hit bottom when Dr. Jung told him that he would either go mad or die without a spiritual experience. But nothing shattered Dr. Bob's ego to induce surrender and bottom out, until Bill Wilson gave him Dr. William Duncan Silkworth's wisdom.

(I have heard several old-timers report that it didn't scare them being told, "You will go mad or die." The thing that did stun them enough to hit bottom was being told, "**You might not die.** You might go on living for another 30 or 40 years feeling the same way you feel now".)

The point is... all alcoholics must hit bottom. Bill Wilson hit his after Edwin (Ebby) Thatcher gave Bill a power greater than himself. No such luck for Dr. Bob in the Oxford Group because he had only two of the three essentials of recovery: the spiritual answer and the plan of action. But it wasn't enough! It took Dr. Silkworth's devastating revelation of the mental obsession coupled with the physical craving that gave Dr. Bob the missing element.

The history of Alcoholics Anonymous gives us everything we need to help egotistical newcomers hit bottom. It took Bill Wilson years to put all the pieces together, but today it seems simple. Here it is: From Dr. Jung we have the spiritual experience; from Dr. Silkworth we learned of the mental obsession that forces us to take the first drink, after which, the physical craving sets in that condemns us to either insanity or death because we can't stop drinking; from clergyman Sam Shoemaker and the Oxford Groups, we have the basis for our steps and the program of action; and from Dr. Harry Tieboate, his unrelenting insistence on ego reduction. (See *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*).

So how do we use these "historical tools" to help newcomers hit bottom? Isn't it common sense to follow the proven path of our AA pioneers? Bill made no headway with drunks for 6 months because he was preaching his spiritual experience. But when he dropped his ego and revealed his own personal suffering, and used Dr. Silkworth's mental obsession and physical craving on Dr. Bob, then it worked. Therefore, our own stories and Dr. Silkworth's hard medical facts work because the newcomer can identify with them, which produces feelings of powerlessness and, in turn, shatters their ego.

Exchanging humorous drunk stories with newcomers doesn't get the job done. Too many times I've seen this approach fortify the ego rather than tear it down. Suffering and pain produces surrender, not laughter and joy. That's another thing that Dr. Jung taught us.

In closing, we don't need to reinvent the wheel, but simply follow the lead of our AA historical figures. We can learn from history and thereby, help the newcomer.

- *Anonymous*

## Thought to Ponder

Minds are like parachutes -- they won't work unless they're open.

# 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**

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

## **WANTED!** **YOUR STORY** *The Sandhills Intergroup Newsletter wants to hear from* **YOU!**

We want to hear your stories,  
inspirational messages and words of wisdom.  
Your experience, strength and hope is needed  
to build a better newsletter for all AA'ers.  
Our next issue will be published September 2022.

**Send submissions to:**  
**SandhillsNews@gmail.com**

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All AA'ers Welcome!

**EMAIL**  
**moorecountyyaa@gmail.com**

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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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