

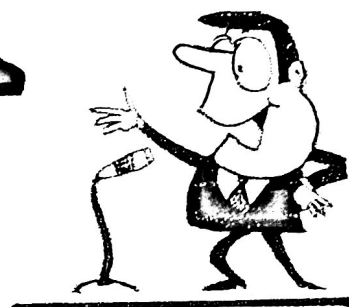
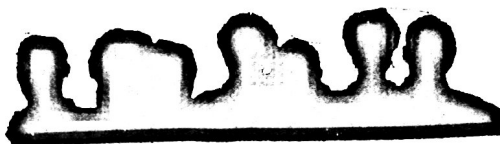


Volume 15, Number 1, January 1, 2016

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

FEATURES:

- FYI
- Spotlight on
Our Groups
- Traveling
Highlights
- Historical
Facts of AA
- District 52
- Member's
Musings
- Carrying the
Message



"Darn it !
I missed the Speaker
Meeting last night. I
heard it was real good.

Don't worry ... it was probably recorded &
you can listen to it at your convenience.

Your Intergroup has been taping speakers in
Moore County since the 4th quarter of 2012
and the talks are posted on their website:

moorecountyyaa.org

If your group has an upcoming speaker and
you would like it recorded please email us:

postmaster@moorecountyyaa.org

Alcoholics Anonymous has been called an Upside-down organization because the "final responsibility and ultimate authority for...world services" resides with the groups - rather than with the trustees of the General Service Board or the GSO (General Service Office) in New York.

AA is the one place where the "little guy" has the chance to be heard. Our Home Groups are autonomous and vary greatly but we all have the right to present our views, concerns and suggestions to our District. They, in turn, will relay these concerns through the Area and on up to the General Service Conference.

All of these organizations are self supporting and rely upon the generosity of the Home Groups to keep them going.

Note: The Sandhills Intergroup is not a part of the structure of the Fellowship. We are an organization formed to provide services for the AA community in the county of Moore.

The Intergroup does not act as mediator or make any suggestions or recommendations. We have no voting privileges.

The Sandhills Intergroup provides local services that would be difficult for any one Home Group to handle... such as the answering service, the placement of literature in public places, the publication of this Newsletter, etc.

We rely upon the generosity of our Home Groups and would like to thank each and every one for the support that has been given to us...so that we are able to continue serving you.

STRUCTURE OF THE FELLOWSHIP (as represented in our Sandhills area)

HOME GROUPS

The registered Home Groups in Moore County send an elected GSR (General Service Rep.) to the quarterly District Mtgs. They also elect an alternate GSR to cover when the other is unable to attend. The views and/or concerns of the group are presented at these District meetings.

DISTRICT 52

District 52 is made up of 5 counties: Moore, Richmond, Scotland, Hoke & Lee. GSR's from the Home Groups of these counties make up the membership and representatives are chosen from this group to attend the Area Assemblies. District officers are also elected from this group and serve 2 years. The offices are that of DCM (District Committee Member), an alternate DCM, a secretary and a treasurer.

AREA 51

This is the final link between AA in our State and the world services of AA. Basically, the area committee is composed of all district committee members, those from each district whom GSR's have elected to represent them. The officers are elected from this group and also serve on a two year basis. Area Assemblies are held 3 or 4 times a year and a delegate (and alternate) are elected to attend the General Service Conference of that year.

GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

This is a yearly conference made up of word-wide delegates chosen from the Area Assemblies. The concerns and suggestions of local home groups, such as ours in the Sandhills, finally get to be viewed and voted on at the conference. Everyone who is a delegate has a voice and a vote.

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR GROUPS

The VASS Group

The Vass Group is one of the older Moore County groups. It was formed in 1983 when the minister at the First Baptist Church invited three AA members living locally to use their facilities. These three men were the core of the group but it soon grew. AA members from Sanford came down and helped the new group get established.

The Vass Group format is a closed discussion meeting held at 8pm on Wednesdays. Meetings are held in the sanctuary behind the main church.

A different Vass member is chairperson each week and is responsible for getting the AA person who will lead the discussion. This leads to an interesting diversity in the meetings.

If you are looking for a "no-frills" group Vass may be the one for you.

SOME LOCAL HISTORY

800-496-1742

The Sandhills Intergroup was formed in 1988 and their first service was to provide an AA meeting list. After that the big challenge was to find a way to operate an answering service.

Remember, this was in 1988 and there were only a handful of meetings. Money was scarce and the solution seemed to be a taped phone message. This actually worked fairly well for a while. We had a local phone number listed under AA in the phone book and when the call was made the tape would go on and the caller would hear a very brief overview of AA and a list of the weekly meetings and their locations.

This type of service became outmoded as more and more meetings were formed in the county. The Intergroup had two of three trial runs with a number ringing to a persons home, but these were disasters ...for obvious reasons.

Finally, and with the continuing financial contributions of many of the AA groups, the Intergroup was able to hire a professional answering service. This was in 2001. It was a local service and, though it worked for a few years, the owner had fiscal problems (unbeknown to us) and fled the county, leaving us in a jam !

Since we never have maintained an office or a regular phone, we

were under the impression that the service had us (AA of Moore County) on a regular phone extension. This was not the case because they were actually an off shoot of a larger service and we found ourselves caught up in their legal mess.

Finally something good came out of it when a company in Charlotte took over all the accounts. This is our current service and they do a good job. They are used to our type of caller, since they also service all the AA and NA calls in Charlotte.

When the operator gets a call and the caller wants to speak to an AA person the operator will take the callers first name and phone # and tell them they will get someone to call them as soon as possible. The operator then refers to the list of AA members that we have given to them and they will call until they reach one. Then they can patch the caller through.

Since the advent of our Website, we have found that more and more people are relying on this for their information and it has cut down on our calls. However the answering service is still vital and we thank all of you who are, or have been, on the list to be called.

If you are an AA member in Moore County with a year or more of sobriety and would like to be part of this service please contact an Intergroup member, or better still come join us. We meet the first Saturday of each month at 9 in the Aberdeen building.

AA HISTORY and HERITAGE



BILL's FIRST DRINK

Bill W. said and wrote an awful lot of interesting things that are rarely talked about in the rooms, perhaps because they are not in our "Conference approved Literature". One I love is Bill's description of first experiencing the effects of alcohol.

This event is covered for its importance by biographers Robert Thomson and Susan Cheever, and AA historian Ernie Kurtz. After all, this experience was in effect the gateway to a path which led Bill to the depths of alcoholism, followed by recovery, and a life dedicated to the Fellowship. Following is a synopsis, and an excerpted version of Robert Thomson's account in *Bill W.*

Bill was determined to never drink because of the way the drinking of others had harmed him. Then, as a newly commissioned Army officer, he attends a party given by wealthy socialites. Bill is self-conscious. He feels awkward, inferior and alone in this crowd. At a previous dinner party he had drunk a glass of beer

and felt no effect. But this time he accepts a mixed drink ... and then another, and more. Here is how he described what happened:

"Perhaps it took a little time, but it seemed to happen instantly. He could feel his body relaxing, a stiffness going out of his shoulders as he sensed the warm glow seeping through him into the distant, forgotten corners of his being.

...soon he had the feeling that he wasn't the one being introduced but that people were being introduced to him: he wasn't joining groups, groups were forming around him. It was unbelievable. And the sudden realization of how quickly the world could change, ...he had to laugh and he couldn't stop laughing.

...it was a miracle. There was no other word. A miracle that was affecting him mentally, physically, and, as he would soon learn, spiritually too. Still smiling, he looked at the people around him. These were not superior beings. They were friends. They liked him and he liked them.

...(Later he leaves the party) with a thrill of pride at the way his mind was working, at the magnificent clarity with which he was now understanding everything.

...at his back he could hear the whine of a saxophone, little waves of voices rising, falling, but now

they in no way ran against all the over-whelming joy he was feeling. His world was all around him, young and fresh and loving, and as he made his way down the drive he moved easily, gracefully, as though he knew exactly how they felt. ...all his life he had been living in chains. Now he was free."

Well, for me too, alcohol did initially provide a powerful freedom ... freedom from my inhibitions, my doubts and insecurities, my shyness and my self-consciousness ... well, you know the list !

Slowly that freedom turned to a kind of bondage, with consequences which threatened all things of importance in my life.

..."It was always an amazement to Bill that anything which in the end could drag a man so low could in the beginning lift him so high."

As it says in what we call the Ninth Step Promises, the Program gives me a "new" freedom, a freedom based in reality, not delusion. It allows me to deal with life with a clear sober mind and to face my problems and limitations in a mature and responsible way. It allows me to find success and happiness as I choose to define success and happiness for myself.

What a gift our AA predecessors have passed on to us !

AA member: Jim M.

CARRYING the MESSAGE

YOUNG in RECOVERY

I think every newcomer has a very similar mental argument with themselves while sitting in one of the first meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous. This internal discussion usually consists of:

"Do I really even have a problem?

Do I belong here?

Noone is going to understand me.

Maybe if I try again I can stop on my own or learn to control myself.

Would anyone notice if I snuck out the back door?"

That's exactly what was going through my head but, being so young, I had some other questions I was asking myself...some that scared me.

"I'm only eighteen. Do I even belong here?

I haven't been drinking for as long as most people, am I really an alcoholic?"

And the one that made my heart sink:

"Can I really give up my old lifestyle?"

I barely remember my first attempt at recovery. My mind was so clouded by pain and nothing I said or did seemed to make any sense.

Looking back now it's all very foggy but I do remember those questions keeping me up at night. But, after a year of coming to meetings, I found myself looking around the room and feeling an overwhelming sense of humanity, something I had longed for while in my fog-like state of mind.

I actually remember the specific day because while sitting there and looking at the comfortable faces of old-timers I felt, for once, like I had a special place of belonging.

I could see a glimpse of my future I could imagine myself twenty years from now sitting in the same room. Two years ago I would not have thought it would be possible to live that long, let alone be in a room surrounded by recovery and love.

When I was a child I had a long list of what I wanted to be when I grew up: veterinarian, ballerina, the President of the United States and, if I had enough time in between all of that I would fit in a movie star. Alcoholic was not on the list ... but, of course, no one chooses that life.

No eighteen year old wants to live in a halfway house. Kids my age are out on a Saturday night while I am at a meeting. Am I going to sulk about this or choose to be

happy? Do I continue to have a pity party or do I make a better life for myself?

Of course at first this made me angry! I'm a kid, a rebellious one at that and I didn't want to follow instructions or live with rules. You're not alone if you feel this way! I strove to be "normal" and fit in with young adults my age; but, the truth is, if they are living the destructive lifestyle that I was once living I can't have any part of it. Once I was able to stop comparing myself to others and wholeheartedly admitted that if I continued on the path I was taking my life would be short lived, I was able to slow down and begin my work.

Because of AA I was finally able to start growing up. All of you taught me how to be a respectable young woman. You taught me how to smile again and to laugh. You taught me what friendship was and that family doesn't always mean blood. You showed me what God's grace looked like.

You showed me a new way of life and flooded my broken heart with love. Alcoholics Anonymous changed my life and every one of you saved my life. Being young is hard enough and being young in recovery is as simple as you make it.

My advice to the newcomer? We've all asked ourselves these questions. Keep coming back.

Hanna H.
Young AA member in recovery

TRAVELING HIGHLIGHTS



AA MEETINGS are HERE and THERE WHEN TRAVELING

Many of us like to go to meetings on a regular basis. How can we do this when we travel? Basically AA meetings are everywhere in the world. Our job is to find the meetings and then get there.

How do I find an AA meeting?

There are two primary sources. First you can call or visit the local AA service center. They can provide meeting schedules and sometimes even assist in getting us to a meeting. Another source, not available a decade ago, is the internet. If we enter AA meetings in Moore County or in any other City or County or Town we will find a site of meeting lists. These lists are typically up to date and show time, place, type, and location of meetings.

In larger cities these sites can include maps showing meeting locations. In major cities, they may even display bus routes or subway lines with stations to

help us get to a meeting.

What will I find at these meetings?

My experiences have been great. Invariably there will be differences. Sometimes people will stand to read How It Works and the Traditions. Sometimes the Steps are read separately by another person. Sometimes the group requests that people limit their sharing to a few minutes and even appoint a "spiritual time keeper" to remind people of the limit.

Sometimes you are invited to stand or even go to the microphone in front of the room if you want to share. Even the cadence/rhythm of familiar prayers is different. Despite these small differences, there is one constant...one alcoholic listening to another alcoholic.

What fun experiences have I found at these meetings?

In New Hampshire I called information for the number of the Service Center. Upon hearing the word "alcohol" they gave me the number of a State Liquor Store. Not quite being what I had in mind I called information again and carefully asked (and got) the local AA Service Center.

In Baltimore I went to the concierge desk at a hotel and asked where I would find an AA meeting. He said, "I go to a meeting about six blocks from here. There is a meeting

there in an hour."

In Ireland there was no answer at the local AA Service Center. In desperation I went to a gas station and told the owner my name and that I was an alcoholic and that I wanted (needed?) to go to a meeting. He looked at me and shook his head in disbelief. He then made two phone calls and let me talk to the woman on the 2nd call. She asked me where I was. I told her and she said, "See the church across the street?" "Yes" "Do you see the school behind the church?" "Yes" "There is a meeting in the school in an hour". I went there and was asked to lead the meeting. I was home !

I went to a meeting in Luxembourg. The language there is something between French and German, neither of which I spoke. Yet I still knew when they were reading How It Works and the Traditions and I knew exactly what was said when there was that deadly silence. The chairperson had just asked if anyone had a topic for the meeting. Ah, AA is universal.

Just going to a meeting?

When attending meetings out of town I have made some nice contacts. I have been invited to lunch with people I just had met. I have been given rides. I have had the chance to help someone new in the program. I have been an example of others who travel who did not know they could go to meetings out

of town. I could be there for an alcoholic and alcoholics could be there for me. What a gift? One alcoholic helping another alcoholic.

If I go to a city frequently I try to find a meeting I like, and when I go back I go to the same meeting. Thus my anxieties of going to a new place are lessened and I have an out of town home group where people know me. What a comfort that is for me and if I have a concern I am more comfortable talking about it at my temporary home group.

And in summary ?

One of the gifts of our fellowship is how we welcome one another. I have been welcomed in languages I do not understand, in tough neighborhoods and in areas where I was clearly the stranger. I have always left with a sense of gratitude for our fellowship and I have found the help needed to stay sober one day at a time.

These experiences remind me to treat visitors in my home group in ways that others have treated and accepted me while traveling.

Yes, it is simply one alcoholic listening to another alcoholic. That is how it was in Akron, Ohio in 1935 and how it is worldwide today.

Submitted by: Frank O.
AA member and visitor from
Syracuse, NY

MEMBERS MUSINGS



Gather and Scatter

The AA way of life is an addiction...a good addiction ! I can't imagine what my life would be like today had I not been blessed with this program of recovery.

In the early days of recovery I felt shame because I thought I was "bad". I didn't know at the time that I had a disease that knew no cure BUT there was a remission I could enter if I followed a few simple suggestions. Imagine that !

I went through the standard 28 day treatment program as an in-patient. My second day in the facility we were bussed to an AA meeting. I looked around the room and KNEW I wasn't one of 'them'. When we returned to the hospital I was certain they would realize they'd made a mistake in my diagnosis. However ...

28 days later when I left treatment the Counselor said to me, "if you go home and start stuffing your feelings ...

YOU WILL GET DRUNK !
I believed him and it's an issue I am acutely aware of every day. As you may know, people pleasing & stuffing feelings go together quite naturally. I've made significant positive progress with both these issues, thanks to the program of recovery.

Growing up I was a "people pleaser" so following the suggestions of this new way of life wasn't difficult for me. It was suggested that I get a Sponsor, go to meetings and read the Big Book. Those were my earliest suggestions and I followed them to the letter.

One week out of treatment my Sponsor called and asked if I was going to the women's meeting that day. We'd had a terrible snow storm the night before and I looked out the window and replied "gosh. I don't know. We have so much snow!" She didn't miss a beat and said "how'd you get to the liquor store?" and I said, "I'll be there". My people pleasing was still pretty active.

Treatment set me on the path but AA has been my guide and each one of you... my mentor. It's important to my recovery that I give freely of what I have been given through the fellowship.

I am sharing these little tidbits because I've come to realize that the quality of my recovery is based on *what I gather as well as what I scatter*.

Written by AA Member:
Sally S.

Food for thought

Steps may just be steps but you won't move unless you take them.

I am not punished FOR my sins. I am punished BY them !

DISTRICT 52 **NEWS**

Jeff M. has stepped up to fill the spot of treasurer for the district. Thanks, Jeff

Officers for DISTRICT 52 for 2015 & 2016 are:

DCM: Vic L.
Alt. DCM: Jason W.
Treasurer: Jeff M.
Secretary: Rebecca R.

District 52 **Business Meeting**

Sunday
February 7
2pm
Aberdeen Bldg.

Followed at 3:30 by:

WORKSHOP

Singleness of Purpose

& covered dish meal.

(attendants please
bring covered dish
foods to share)



GSR's **(General Service Reps)** **Critical to AA**

The basic process of keeping our Home Groups and Meetings connected to the AA Organization starts with our GSR's and their attendance at District 52 meetings.

District 52 is made up of Moore, Hoke, Richmond, Lee and Scotland counties & meetings of the GSR's from these groups are held four times a year.

Additionally, the GSR's and officers attend Area (State) assemblies twice a year and our DCM attends the 2 meetings each year of DCM's and Area officers for the state.

Sandhills Intergroup

A central office established to aid groups and meetings in Moore County in order to carry the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers. We provide:

- * 24 hr. Answering service
- * Website
- * Moore County Meeting list
- * Newsletter
- * Recorded speakers
- * P. I. Group that distributes AA schedules and material
- * Adopt-a-Pro packets for Professionals

We are funded solely by the AA groups in our county and we need, ask and thank you for your input.

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