



# NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, No. 2 May 2003

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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Once again we welcome our readers and encourage you to become contributors.

The next Newsletter will be published in September. The deadline for submitting articles and ideas is the month before publication.

Remember, The articles should be your personal experience, strength and hope as it relates to Alcoholics Anonymous. We want and need your input !!!

The Intergroup plans on three editions per year, in January, May and September. Please see any Intergroup member for details, or better yet, come join us on the first Saturday of each month at the Aberdeen Wilder building at 9am. The meetings are one hour in duration and all AA members are encouraged to attend.

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#### AA "Closed" Meetings

We have been alerted to the fact that some newcomers do not understand the term "closed" as it pertains to meetings.

Remember, our Tradition Three states: The **ONLY** requirement for AA membership is the desire to stop drinking".

This means that if you desire to stop drinking,... and only you can be the judge of this... you have the right to become a member of Alcoholics Anonymous and to attend any or all of our meetings.

The official AA website, [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) defines Closed Meetings as:

"These meetings are limited to alcoholics. They provide an opportunity for members to share with one another on problems related to drinking patterns and attempts to achieve stable sobriety. They also permit detailed discussion of various elements in the recovery program"

"Open Meetings", as the term suggests, are open to alcoholics and their families (or anyone) interested in solving a personal drinking problem ...or helping someone else to solve such a problem. (See our Meeting Schedules for details.)



## SPOTLIGHT ON OUR GROUPS



### The West End Group

The old West End Senior Citizen's building has been the meeting location of the West End Group since it was started in March, 1979.

It was the first group started away from the more populous Southern Pines, Pinehurst, Aberdeen area and attracted a lot of recovering people from Montgomery County. It has also benefited from the growth of the Seven Lakes community.

The West End Group meets once a week, at 7 pm on Sunday nights.

### The Southern Pines Group & Morning Break Group

The Emmanuel Episcopal church in Southern Pines has been the long-standing site for these two day-time meetings.

The Tuesday noon "Southern Pines Group" and the Thursday 10 am "Morning Break Group" are both closed discussion, non-smoking meetings.

### The Primary Purpose Group

The Primary Purpose Group was formed in June 1997. It holds meetings on Monday and Thursday evenings at 8pm in the First Baptist Church, Southern Pines.

The group emphasizes action and service. All areas of AA service are in place in this group. There is a focus on correctional facilities, treatment facilities, public information and cooperation with the professional community, newcomer sessions and regularly scheduled workshops on recovery related areas.

The Primary Purpose Group holds that action is indeed the "magic" word.

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## TEST YOUR AA-IQ!!!



1. "Our Meeting in Print" is the slogan for \_\_\_\_\_, printed and distributed by AA monthly.

2. H.A.L.T. stands for :  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_.  
4 things we need to try to avoid.

3. Many beginners find the yellow soft-cover AA book "\_\_\_\_\_", to be of great help.
4. The primary purpose of each AA group is to \_\_\_\_\_.
5. In AA we have the right to choose a God \_\_\_\_\_.
6. We, in AA, have a daily reprieve from alcoholism, contingent on the maintenance of our \_\_\_\_\_.
7. AA newcomers are amazed when they hear \_\_\_\_\_ in the meetings.
8. Page 449 (on acceptance) in the first three editions of Alcoholics Anonymous is now on page \_\_\_\_\_ in the 4<sup>th</sup> edition.
9. Our AA principles are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than \_\_\_\_\_.
10. "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to \_\_\_\_\_."

(Answers to quiz on back page)



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.

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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.

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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.

...local services

## 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.



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## MEMBERS MUSINGS

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### "LASTING FRIENDSHIPS"

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During all the years that I drank I thought I had lots of friends. We were together a lot and had what I thought were great times. These friends were the group that I drank with from work or from the neighborhood.

Little did I know that they were only drinking companions. When the tough times came they were nowhere to be found.

It was in the Fall of 1978 that my drinking had finally hit bottom and I was forced into making some of the hardest decisions I would ever have to make.

My employer gave me the ultimatum of losing my job or going for help with my drinking problem. At that time I thought this was the worse thing that could have happened. I had to support a family. I did not know what would happen to them, but I also knew that losing my job would cause much hardship. I agreed to give detox a try.

I was referred to a six week rehabilitation program at Farm Cottage in Ogdensburg, New York where they said I would receive the help I needed to achieve sobriety.

During rehab I realized I had a drinking problem and learned what I would need to do, once I was released, to stay sober. It was at Farm Cottage that I was introduced to AA. We had meetings in house and were bussed to outside meetings.

When I was released I was encouraged to attend AA...they suggested 90 meetings in 90 days. It was just after Christmas 1978.

The first six months of my "white knuckle" sobriety was HELL. I did nothing that was suggested. The friends I had always thought would be there for me were nowhere to be found. In fact, they never called or tried to come to see me while I was in rehab.

I felt very alone, the "PAIN" got so bad that I thought I should try what had been recommended at rehab and I did start going to AA meetings...the ones that were not in my hometown!

The little northern New York community where I lived didn't even have an AA group. I had to find meetings outside the town and would travel sometimes up to 25 miles one way to attend a meeting.

I started to like the meetings and I started to listen. I even had a "little" serenity after going to meetings for about a year. Members of the various groups I was attending started to "pressure" me into thinking about starting a meeting in my home town. (I did not like the idea as I would have to park my vehicle in front of the church for all to see.)

This terrified me as I thought people would talk about me and I wasn't sure I was strong enough to handle it. I did, however, "cave in" and started a meeting which was held in the local Catholic Church basement on Saturday nights at 7 PM. The first meeting was held in January, 1981 (this was one of the best things I ever did). We also started an Al-Anon meeting during the same time.

From January of 1981 until July of 1995, when I moved to North Carolina, I was dedicated to this group. I would be there whenever I could. My work was shift work and for a few years it was seven days a week during the summer.

When I was scheduled to work a Saturday, and could not attend the meeting, I went by early and "set up", (coffee, literature and books, etc.) Our normal attendance was 6 to 10 people (and 3 to 4 at Al-Anon). I guess that I became the GSR, Secretary, Treasurer, coffee-maker...you name it.



I did whatever I could for that group as the group had given me my sobriety. I did this for over 15 years with love in my heart for that group. It was at that meeting where, without ever realizing it, the lasting friendships in my life really developed and where I began to learn and grow. I loved these people like no other friends I have ever had.

It was hard leaving that meeting but, over the years, some of the people who had achieved their sobriety would be there to carry the message on to others.

Over the past 8 years, since I have lived in North Carolina, some of the friends from that very group have taken time to stop and visit me. What a great surprise to know that they were willing to take time out of a vacation to come and spend a few hours with an old friend.

Then, in mid November of 2002 I received an anniversary card from the New York group. I opened the card and found that all the group had a message for me on the card along with an anniversary medallion. This brought tears of joy and appreciation to my eyes just thinking about the group. Also, it made me think about where I might have been had that group not been there.

There are no words to explain the friendships that are made in AA...the bond is forever there.

I realize today that, even though I am miles away, my heart still remains with that little group... the group that saved my life.

Talk about lasting friendships, the friendships that give you your life back...a life better than you ever dreamed you'd have. That meeting...and all the other meetings I attend are what keep me sober.

Bob G  
Vass Group

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### PUZZLE

Unscramble the words and find what the recovering alcoholic told the suffering drunk?

PERAG  
\_ O \_ \_ O

E GAT  
\_ \_ O O

CILSK  
O O O \_ \_

CUHOP  
\_ O O \_ O

TONK  
\_ O O O

ANSWER:

\_\_\_\_\_ is a \_\_\_\_\_

## CARRYING THE MESSAGE



### KEEP IT SIMPLE

"Keeping it simple" is not always easy for the newcomer in AA. This is especially true when he or she comes in contact with the many paradoxical phrases that are heard in the rooms.

Here is a list of some of those phrases. Can you think of any others?

"SURRENDER to WIN"

"LET GO"....."HOLD ON"

"TAKE IT EASY.....but, DO IT"

"STRENGTH arising out of complete DEFEAT"

"To KEEP the gift of sobriety I must GIVE IT AWAY.

"The more we DEPEND upon a Higher Power..... the more INDEPENDENT we become"

"Keep your EXPECTATIONS LOW...and the SKY'S THE LIMIT"



## LITTLE KNOWN FACTS OF AA ....



(In the last issue of the Sandhills Newsletter Bill H. of the West Side Group wrote of his experiences with AA in New Zealand, Australia and the South Pacific. This is Part 2 of his article that tells the story of Ian McE, the first person to achieve sobriety through the AA program in New Zealand.)

Prior to 1945 some alcoholics in New Zealand were committed for a year or two to Rotorua Island, where the only treatment for alcoholism was abstinence. Ian McE was one of these. He spent a year on the island and within two months of returning to civilization he was back drinking again.

(There are many people of Scottish ancestry in New Zealand and the names of Ian, Ewen and Alistair are quite common. You will notice, too, that the usage of Mc or Mac and an initial is common to anonymity in New Zealand, whereas in the U.S. he would probably be called simply Ian M.)

After making the rounds of his favorite pubs one day in Nelson, Ian McE walked out of a pub and up to a local psychiatric

hospital. He wanted admission but the superintendent of the hospital was not too keen on the idea and telephoned Ian's wife asking her, "What should I do?" She replied, "If you can get him, grab him."

One day while he was in the reading room of the hospital he picked up a copy of Reader's Digest and read an article called "Maybe You Can Do It Too" by Edward McGoldrick. He was an alcoholic who had recovered with the help of an organization called Alcoholics Anonymous.

In his own words Ian said, "I was able to identify with Mr. McGoldrick from this article as I had never identified before. Of course I had been told that I was just a drunk for years and years and the idea of the disease concept of alcoholism was unknown in New Zealand at that time. I was able to see that I was exactly like him. I drank like he did, I thought like he did and he had recovered and he recommended that anybody in this situation who was wanting help to get in touch with Alcoholics Anonymous. So this I did."

Ian wrote directly to the address of AA in New York which was given in the article. His letter was sent from Richmond, Nelson (my home group when I am in New Zealand) 3, January, 1946. In this letter Ian took the first step of his own recovery and Alcoholics Anonymous in New Zealand was born. Bobbie B, secretary of the GSO of AA

in New York replied to his letter on 1, March, 1946 and there began a remarkable 10 year correspondence which helped to keep Ian sober while AA in New Zealand grew slowly around him.

Much of Ian's contact with other alcoholics who were seeking recovery was through correspondence. New Zealand has vast areas of wilderness and in those days many towns in the South Island were connected by unpaved roads and winding thru Mountain passes. A trip to the North Island was a ferry ride of several hours. Ian's sponsor was over 10,000 miles away and long distance telephone calls prohibitively expensive.

By April, 1947, Ian had made contact with two possible members. They were both to slip badly later and it was not until February, 1948 that there were five members, all "on solid ground" and plans were being made to form the first group in New Zealand.

Bill H., West Side Group

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### AA SENIOR CITIZEN'S PRAYER

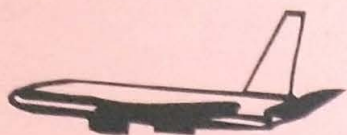
God, grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked anyway...the good fortune to run into the ones I do... and the eyesight to tell the difference. !

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## TRAVELING HIGHLIGHTS



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### AA in THAILAND

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Over the years I have attended many AA meetings in far-away places. To me, the spirit of AA remains the same everywhere, but there are some unusual variations in members and meetings.

A two year job assignment in Thailand brought me in contact with some of the most unusual.

The first task was to find the meeting place. I had the address from the AA directory but, in the fairly remote town where my job took me, that turned out to be just a starting point. Finally I found it on foot, down a dark back alley far too small for cars to navigate. It was in a primitive back room, behind a factory where sad looking women were sewing clothes...probably for export to the USA.

Back to the meetings...there were two each week, attended by 6 to 10 men. No women, no Thai natives, just us foreigners. I was usually the only American and I think I may have been the only one with a steady job.

The majority were drifters, from Scotland, England, Australia or just passing through. Some had organized their life to their own likings there in Pattaya City.

One man came to all the meetings but looked straight ahead and never spoke a word. I think maybe he spoke no English but was there for the spirit. Another got his spending money by selling cakes his girl friend made. Good cakes! Another, a tough looking ex-military guy, hired himself out as a bodyguard to travelers or anyone needing his services.

What we had in common was a desire to stop drinking. It was enough to make us brothers. The meetings helped to keep me sober for my time in Thailand and for that I am grateful. Very grateful. Thanks AA.

Anonymous: Southern Pines

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## BOOK REVIEW



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You gotta read "Grounded" in our 4<sup>th</sup> edition Big Book. I was privileged to hear the story of this alcoholic at the Gratitude Retreat, Myrtle Beach, in Jan. His last drunk was televised on the evening news and reported by the world news services.

Having grown up with alcoholic

parents (Irish/Comanche) he had become what he vowed he would never be...an alcoholic. A Marine Corps pilot whose persona was hard, gutsy flying, he perceived happy hour as a duty with equally hard drinking.

He became a major airline captain years before the FAA cross-checked drivers records against pilot's licenses.

Read about that disgraceful day when he was arrested and charged with violation of a federal law prohibiting the operation of a common carrier while intoxicated...flying while drunk. He was notorious in commercial aviation, the first pilot to face this charge and was the object of scorn, shame and humiliation.

Late night TV comics used him for joke fodder. Contemplating suicide to escape insufferable pain, he entered treatment and learned his career had ended on the 6 o'clock news.

Read about his fervent belief that the key to his sobriety and survival lay in the power of all he was taught by AA in treatment and prison. It's a story of acceptance, courage & wisdom of a drunk, convicted felon and ex-con. "Adversity truly introduces us to ourselves", he said. Read what happened to him and how he is today...his "life's miracles by the grace of a loving God".

Hope to see you at the Gratitude Retreat in "04.

Anonymously Joyous, Vass Gr.



## ANSWERS TO QUIZ



1. "The Grapevine"
2. hungry, angry, lonely & tired.
3. "Living Sober"
4. carry it's message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
5. "as we understand him."
6. spiritual condition
7. laughter
8. 417
9. spiritual perfection.
10. place principles before personalities.

### Sandy Hills



**COTTONMOUTH**

(Ideas for the Sandy Hills cartoon? See Myrna J.)

## WHAT IS INTERGROUP?



We are a service committee formed for the purpose of supporting AA activities in the Moore County area of North Carolina.

Our goal is to improve communication and understanding among our AA groups in order to unite all efforts to better serve the alcoholic who seeks the help of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Sandhills Intergroup is comprised of interested volunteer members and representatives from the AA groups in Moore County.

The ideas and suggestions of the local AA members are welcome and all are encouraged to attend the monthly meetings at 9 AM on the first Saturday of each month at the AA building on Wilder Ave. in Aberdeen.

Sandhills Intergroup is financed by local AA groups. The treasurer presents an annual estimated budget and, with the continued support of the AA groups we anticipate continued success.

The Public Information Committee of Intergroup distributes

lists and literature to local hotels, motels, hospitals, comm. buildings, law enforcement, mental health and medical and professional agencies

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Volunteer support from the Moore County AA community is needed to help with Intergroup functions as listed below:

1. Maintain a 24 hour answering service to:

A) provide meeting information to callers.

B) answer 12 step calls. (The answering service has a list of AA volunteers who return these calls and give assistance)

- 2) Maintain a website with meeting information, News letter and directions.
- 3) Update and distribute meeting lists and AA approved information Pamphlets

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