

Sandhills
Intergroup

NEWSLETTER



Volume 6, Number 2, May 2007

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

AA - P.I. - C.P.C.

Alphabet soup ... or a message to recovery?

Everyone in recovery is well aware of the initials AA but many members might not have reached the rooms without P.I. or C.P.C.

The PI, *Public Information*, and CPC, *Cooperation with the Professional Community*, committees are informational service functions of AA. It is often because of the efforts of these committees that sufferers are first made aware of the possibility of recovery through AA. Their purpose is to make sure that when anyone, anywhere, reaches out AA will be there and reachable. These committees of the local Intergroup, District or Area, operate with assistance of the GSO, *General Service Office*, of AA.

PI committees carry the

message to the still suffering alcoholic by informing the general public about the AA program. This is done by providing AA literature and speakers to schools, police departments, libraries, other organizations and the media.

C.P.C. committees inform the professionals who come in contact with alcoholics about our program and how we can work together to support recovery. It is important that AA works with professionals who treat alcoholism. In order to accomplish this, the CPC committee provides professionals with information on how AA works and how alcoholics they deal with can reach AA through our Answering Service, Website and meeting schedules.

The Sandhills Intergroup meets the first Sat. of each month at 9am in the Aberdeen bldg. We work closely with District 52 and encourage anyone who is interested in working with our PI - CPC committees to join us.

TRAVELING HIGHLIGHTS



Editor's note:

This article was written for the Sept. 2003 edition of the Newsletter. We reprint it here so that our new, young AA members will see that there is plenty of fun to be had in sobriety. (I'm sure you "old fogeys" will enjoy it too.)

TRAVELIN' LIGHT

We begin our travels in the early morning hours of April 19, 2003 at approximately 4:45 am. We were on a road trip for what was to be one of two incredible weekends of live music.

We left town and headed to Philadelphia to go and see our favorite band "Widespread Panic", good Southern rock and roll. The show was at a venue that seated approx. 2,000 people which is a rarity for this band.

We were truly blessed for the seats that we got for the show. We had front row and center seats and we could literally put our water on the stage with the

band. This is the closest we had ever been to the band.

We got into town at about 1:30 in the afternoon & got checked into the hotel room. Next we proceeded to get on the phone & start calling friends that we knew were going to the show.

The neat thing about this is that many of the concerts that we go to have sober groups at the shows for those who need it. That is how we had phone numbers to get in touch with people from all over coming to the show.

We also called to get directions to AA meetings in the Philly area in case we needed to get to a meeting. So our friends that we met through Gateway, the sober fans of "Widespread Panic", got together & hung out for the rest of the afternoon.

We had a wonderful time talking sobriety and enjoying good cheese steak sandwiches while walking through downtown Philadelphia. It was a great experience to talk of past lives & especially the new ones that we are building while staying sober.

Then it was time for the show. At most shows, but not all, there is a table set up exclusively for the Gateway people. Before the show started I went to look for the table and maybe meet someone like me, that I had not met before. Unfortunately there was

no one attending the table. However the band was selling autographed copies of their new release so we each picked up a copy.

The show was incredible and I (Jimmy) comprehended the word serenity during one of the songs. This has only occurred a few times in the 2 years that I have been sober. I can only describe it vaguely but I can tell you that it felt like the rush that I had during my years of drinking. The High Powered void that I had for so many years was temporarily filled completely.

We woke up Easter morning with no plans for the day. It was truly amazing to me how quiet a major city could be. It seemed like we were the only people awake. After a quick bite to eat from one of Philly's finest street vendors, we decided we had enough time, if we left right away, to go see a major league baseball game at Camden Yards in Baltimore.

So, back on 1-95 we went, heading South. We arrived at the stadium in the middle of the second inning. What a beautiful day, 72 degrees & not a cloud in the sky!! Words cannot explain the gratitude we had to be sober & to enjoy all the aspects of a day at the park. When the public address announcer said, "Please don't drive if you've had too much to drink", we both looked at each other & laughed.

The following weekend was time for the band to start the Southern swing of the Spring tour. This began in Raleigh for 2 nights and a 3rd in Charlotte. Again Darryl & I made the road trip and spoke of recovery and certain aspects of our lives to help each other along and encourage each other in our sobriety.

This time we met up with a friend who stayed with us at the hotel. This weekend, however, did in fact have people manning the Gateway table at the shows. It was a dear friend of mine that I met when I lived in Raleigh, & they did have meetings at the set breaks.

We had really close seats once again, fourth row. The reason we did so well this time is due to Darryl sending away the mail order form in a timely manner. This is something that I could not have done during my days of drinking, and that is a fact.

Both Raleigh nights were wonderful fun. Sunday, April 27 was the show in Charlotte. This was also very special because we knew that Darryl would have back stage passes for the first time ever. Well, my Higher Power was smiling on me that day...I, too, got a backstage pass.

This was truly a gift that I was grateful for. That was the closest I have been to any of the band. I even got to say Hi in

passing to all the band members. Darryl talked with the bass player & the lead guitarist & came back with goose bumps the size of Mt. St. Helena. We did get a picture or two with some of the band members.

You know it is comforting to know that we can have more fun now that we ever had when we were drinking, and remember all of it. Today we are happy, joyous & free, as it says in the Big Book. We have no worries because, if we do the work, our Higher Power always takes care of us.

If you go to see some live music look for the yellow balloon. That is generally a good sign that sober people are around. This symbol was started a long time ago with bands like The Grateful Dead & has continued into future generations of similar music genres.

Darryl W. & Jimmy B.

A.... a
L ... life
C.... centered
O.... on
H.... helping
O.... others
L.... live
I.... in
C.... comfort

A NEW BEGINNING FOR AN "OLD GROUP".....

The "Keep it Simple Beginners Meeting", often referred to as the "Hospital Group" has moved to a new venue.

The Hospital Beginners meeting was started in 1974 and the Sunday Hospital Speaker's meeting was added in the mid 1980's.

There have been many venue changes since that time and the attendance has ebbed and flowed accordingly. It is hoped that this move will be the last for a long time.

The meetings have been moved to the First-Health Specialty Clinics Building on 35 Memorial Drive (what was the old Pinehurst Surgical Clinic.) This is a very easily located venue and there is plenty of parking space.

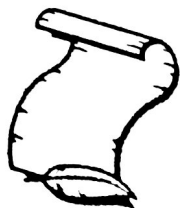
A large room has been prepared for use and there is a small kitchen and bathroom facilities.

The seating arrangement is much more conducive to face-to-face interactions than when the attendance had to face forward in the old auditorium.

The formats remain the same and we hope that you will all come and enjoy our new "digs".

**Keep It Simple Beginners Mtg.
Steering Committee.**

MEMBERS MUSINGS



I have been very pleased with the service work done by the Sandhills Intergroup. I especially like the Newsletter and think it is a special asset to the area groups...our own little *Grapevine*.

Unfortunately my work schedule is such that I cannot directly participate in the Intergroup service work. Back in January I promised that I would write something for the Newsletter. At that time I had become upset about an article I had read on the Internet by a well known psychologist, a person well versed in recovery issues. He had originally written the article as a pamphlet for one of the large commercial publishing houses (think H) that deals with recovery literature. The author said the pamphlet was later withdrawn because it generated too many protests.

Two of the points in the article disturbed me. He (in my perception, at least) was attacking the concept of powerlessness as a cop-out that alcoholics and addicts use or abuse as a justification for their

addictive behavior and that such use of abuse was a block to recover.

Now, to be honest, before I came to AA I did justify my drinking and behavior by telling people I was an alcoholic (and what I was doing was what alcoholics did).

Secondly he argued that alcoholics and addicts frequently develop a dependence on clinics, therapists, hospitals, prisons & other agencies that try to help them (implying that AA was one of these.)

In light of my spiritual distress and great umbrage that I had taken at his article, I was originally going to write an article debating his points. I had several false starts and then decided I had "writer's block" (my Hemingway delusion), when in reality the problem was my old friends (and some of my favorite character defects)... justification, rationalization and procrastination.

So, with something of a deadline I decided to buckle down and write. Fortunately, although procrastination is a character defect, it does have one advantage, it gives me the chance to reconsider rash or screwball thinking, of which I have plenty (now wasn't that a nice piece of rationalization?)

I had gone to the Friday noon Big Book discussion meeting

and they were reading from the chapter "A Vision For You." The meeting straightened out my thinking and it became clear to me that before I arrived at AA my thinking was, "OK, I'm an alcoholic and that's why I drink like I do and nothing is going to change".

Now, the knowledge that I am powerless over alcohol, left to my own resources, is absolutely indispensable to my staying sober....and, that the opinions of some experts, no matter how qualified they may be on the topic, are moot.

As far as his second point (as perceived by me), that alcoholics become dependent on their support systems, "A Vision For You" clearly describes AA as a "substitute" for alcohol...does that mean "dependent" on AA and does that make me a lesser or weaker person because of my need for a substitute? Does it even matter?

The question is, do I want to be struggling alone and isolated from my demons, or do I want to experience the warmth and love to be found in the fellowship?

I recall when I was six months sober, another man (who had about the same time in as I did) said, as we were leaving the meeting, "this AA is just a bunch of brain washing:". At that moment I had a brief (and

rare) moment of clarity...that my brain needed washing.

That was in 1981. I don't know what happened to that other man. He has vanished in the mist...and I am still here in the warmth and light of the fellowship.

So, if you see me starting to get perturbed about something (like a long ago written article I found on the Internet) or some other relevant or recent trauma, just gently remind me that I am not quite right, that I need to be here and that all I have is my experience, strength and hope ...and YOU.

Submitted by Wayne M.

Editor's note:

Thanks to Wayne for his nice reference to the Newsletter.

It is interesting to note that, although he has not the time available to be of service to the Intergroup right now, that he was one of the originators of the Sandhills Intergroup that was formed in 1988.

It was Wayne's voice on a tape that one would hear if they were to call the first Intergroup phone number. At that time there were so few meetings that he could describe them all on a 30 second tape. As is said, "We've come a long way, baby!"

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR GROUPS



QUIETLY HERE

Since the Spring...March or so of 1999, the Carthage "Common Cause Group: has been meeting every Wed. eve. at 8 pm. This group moved 3 times...two locations at Martin St, just down from the Court House Circle and now at it's present location on the corner of McReynolds and Ray St...a block West of the Court House Circle...at 110 McReynolds St.

Behind this two story brick building is a grassy parking area and the meeting is accessed via the steps at the rear of the building. The group meets on the second floor over the ROTC Thrift Shop.

This is probably the longest running meeting in Carthage & probably the northern end of Moore Co. There was a meeting in Carthage going on at the same time this group was started but, sadly, it did not last.

There was a meeting that ran for some time in the 1960's and then another in the 1970's but neither lasted long. There was a meeting at the Prison unit at Hillcrest during the 1980's and 1990's but it was not widely

attended by the community at large.

The Common Cause Group has endured rather quietly but persistently with a small attendance over the last eight years. The meetings are quietly powerful with those coming searching for sobriety and finding, at the least, a piece of what they are looking for.

Many have come and gone but all have left an impression on the group. Over the last few years the group has been building a core group of regular attendees that have helped create a small but stable group. A small contingent of fellow AAers from the Sanford area have been very supportive as well. The dedicated service of Lloyd M has helped the group immeasurably to continue on.

Format wise, the Common Cause Group is a discussion mtg. The group jokingly prides itself for adhering as closely as it can to the 9th tradition which states "AA ought never to be organized" and leaves the discussion topic to be determined by the needs/suggestions of the members present at the group. Cookies, coffee & soft drinks are a regular part of the meeting...one of the members is known at the "cookie man" and he always insures an array of cookie choices are always on hand.

By: AA member Phil H.

HISTORICAL **Facts of AA**

In this segment of our Newsletter we usually concentrate on interesting and unusual facts about the fellowship of AA as it pertains to the program worldwide.

However we have some fascinating AA history of our own right here in Moore County. Not least of these is the advent of our AA Answering Service and the trials and errors that are associated with it.

The Sandhills Intergroup was formed in 1988 and their first service was to provide a meeting schedule list. Their 2nd challenge was to somehow operate an Answering Service.

Remember, this was 1988 and there were far fewer meetings than there are today. Money was scarce and the solution seemed to be with the use of a taped message.

This actually worked quite well for awhile. 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 when our volume of meetings increased. This was in the mid '90's and we then had 2 or 3 trial runs with a number ringing directly to a person's home...but these were disasters, for obvious reasons.

By 2001 the Intergroup was receiving many more contributions than in the past and we were able to opt for a regular commercial answering service.

This was the beginning of our present list of members willing to be contacts when needed. The Answering Service would give out meeting locations and times but if the caller wanted an AA member to talk to the service would contract someone from the list. This was a local service & quite good for awhile, although it was costly (\$125 per month). However the owner had fiscal problems and fled the country...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 got very complicated because we were on some sort of off-shoot of their service and, because they were in legal troubles, we could not get the phone company to put a recording on our listed phone # to tell people where to call for our new 800#. It was a big mess, to say the least, and we agonized over it.

Something good came out of it, however, because that defunct service turned over all it's users to a company in Charlotte. This is our current supplier and they do a wonderful 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 where the caller wants to speak to an AA person they will take the callers first name and phone number and tell them that they will get someone to call them as soon as possible. She then refers to our list of volunteer AA members from Moore County and she calls until she reaches one of us. (This can be quite tedious for the operator, since it often takes 8 to 10 calls before they get an answer. But they are very thorough about this.)

The 800# is displayed on all our literature, in the Sprint and The Pilot telephone books and on our Website. (We have maintained a Website since 2001 and have found that more and more people are relying on this and it has cut down on our calls...but we still get 8 to 10 a month.)

Being on the Answering Service list is a wonderful way to do service work...so, anyone who is an AA member in Moore County with a year or more sobriety is urged to sign on.

Contact Deirdre, Answering Serv.. Chairperson, if you are interested in being on the list.

CARRYING THE MESSAGE

It's often said that in order to keep it you have to give it away. In order to move forward, you have to continuously work with other alcoholics.

Early in sobriety it was with blind faith that I joined the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. So, when I heard these things...and didn't understand them...I had to stand back and trust that more would, in fact, be revealed to me when I needed it.

I had nothing to give away at that point anyway, although I looked forward to the time when I could share something of value to another alcoholic.

With not quite nine months of sobriety behind me, my sponsor asked me to join her on a call to the detox unit at the hospital. I had no idea what kind of experience, strength and hope I could share. However, and probably for the first time in my life, I'm following others' suggestions without question or resistance. I went with her.

Sharing an abridged version of my story put us on level ground where the other people could

see they weren't completely isolated in their suffering. Focusing on the strength and hope I receive from the fellowship and the gratitude I feel was somehow conveyed.

The simple act of giving my phone number to a few women and actually hoping to hear from them was probably more re-warding to me than it was helpful to them.

Never one to trust or depend on the kindness of strangers, this experience has been part of my own spiritual growth, a connection made not only with fellow alcoholics, but with human beings.

By looking through a different lens and sharing my own experience while listening to others' experiences, I see how isolated, self-centered and petrified I was.

My sponsor told me she's seen people with long-term sobriety stop coming to meetings time and time again. She says it's because hearing the same message over and over again does get stale. They get it. In a way, they feel cured.

I've come to understand that. It's like listening to the same lecture again & again. Once you've learned it, there's no point in repeating it.

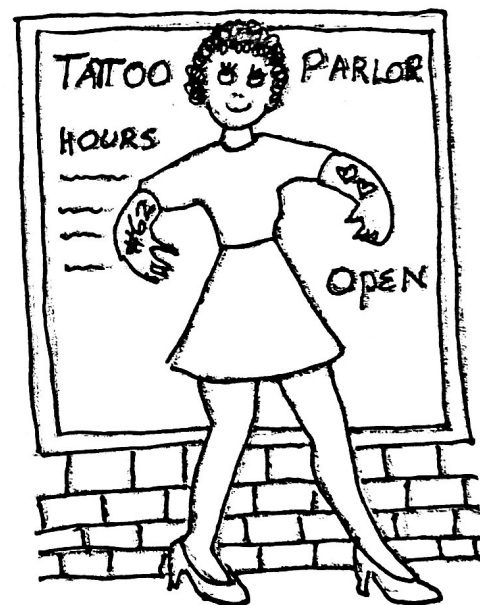
But that's not all there is to it.

It's through work with other alcoholics that an alcoholic can continue to move forward and grow.

I miss as few meetings as possible because I value them above all else. My growth depends on continually reaching out to other people.

AA member Mary G.

Sandy Hills



My next tattoo... Rule #62

(Rule 62: "don't take yourself so darn seriously.")

This rendition of Sandy Hills was inspired by AA member Steve W. Thanks, Steve.

DISTRICT 52 NEWS

The District is trying to build up our success in establishing a functioning **CPC/PI** service committee by starting a Correctional Facilities Committee. The kickoff mtg. was held April 14 with a great turnout. If you want to participate call Rick M at 910-582-5928.

The District officers have been busy contacting groups in our 5 county area to encourage them to participate in the service structure on a regular basis and to insure that GSO has accurate information on the groups.

We have had really encouraging results so far, but haven't gotten to all the groups and meetings.

Despite our rich AA tradition & many great meetings, we are among the worst in the state in terms of participation in the AA service structure. If your group isn't participating we hope you will reconsider, and if your "meeting" has regular attendance by committed members perhaps you will consider becoming a "group". If you would like to discuss this further call Jim M at 910-295-1285.

The next AREA 51 Assembly, (NC) will be in Raleigh, May 18 to 20 and we hope your group will send your GSR or alternate.

The District is planning its **UNITY DAY** meeting July

14th. We are having our North Carolina Delegate to the General Service Conference - Newton P - come to give a report and this will be a great opportunity to hear about the larger issues facing the world-wide Fellowship. I hope we can show our appreciation for his service with a great turnout and lively discussion.

Mark your calendar for:

UNITY DAY, July 14th

The State Convention is in Charlotte July 19-22. Look for the yellow flyers. This is the first time we have used a "smoke-free" hotel but they have assured us we will have ample covered outdoor areas for smokers. We are hopeful this will not hurt attendance, but it is really becoming difficult to find suitable hotels that will accommodate a sizable number of smokers.

And, as a last thought, we hope you and your group will reflect on our Fellowship's symbolic Circle and Triangle and what it means. It says we have **three** Legacies

It's not just

RECOVERY

but also

SERVICE

And

UNITY

Jim M.
DCM, District 52

WHAT IS INTERGROUP?

We are a service committee formed for the purpose of supporting AA activities in Moore County. Our goal is to improve communication and understanding among our AA groups.

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

The ideas and suggestions of local AA's are welcome and all are encouraged to attend the monthly meetings at 9AM on the first Saturday of each month at the AA building on Wilder Ave. in Aberdeen. The Sandhills Intergroup is financed solely by local AA groups.

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