

Volume 4, Number 3, September 2005

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"NEITHER CHASE NOR CHASTISE"

There is an awesome number of alcoholics in the world and AA would like to be able to help them all, but; as Bill W., co-founder of AA said, "We are not going to chase them, chastise them, or campaign for them. All we can hope is that they will come to us for help when help is what they want".

These words were uttered in 1960 where 15,000 men and women gathered at California's Long Beach Memorial Stadium to celebrate AA's 25th Anniversary.

The convention was a great success and was a feature story in Time magazine, although Bill

(true to the Principle of anonymity) refused the offer to have his face be on the cover.

As proof of his own passion for anonymity, Bill also refused an honorary doctorate from Yale. "A degree for what?" he asked, "For being the world's leading drunk?"

In the year 2000, 36 years after his death, Bill W was honored again by Time magazine. He was among the "100 Most Influential People in the 20th Century" ...and this time his picture was displayed.

It is interesting to note that this year in Toronto, Can., approximately 60,000 men and women, (representing practically every area in the world), attended the 70th Anniversary of AA.



SPOTLIGHT ON OUR GROUPS

THE VASS GROUP

The Vass Group originated in 1983 at the invitation of a local minister. He invited three AA members who lived in Vass to start an AA meeting at the First Baptist Church on Rt. 1.

The first meeting was held in the sanctuary of the church. It was attended by three men, a prospect they were 12th Stepping and a couple of members of the Sanford group.

Three of the members of the Vass Group signed a note at the local bank and the old church sanctuary was fixed up with a kitchen and central heating and air conditioning to make it suitable to hold meetings.

The group originally had a closed discussion meeting on Wed. & Thurs. nights and a speaker meeting on Saturday. The format now is a closed discussion on Wednesday nights at 8.

Because of their location in the northern part of Moore County the Vass Group attracts members from Lee, Cumberland, Harnett and Chatham Counties.

The Vass Group has a large membership but is pleased that so many members of other groups consider Vass as their 2nd home. This is apparent because non members often sign up on the calendar to chair a weekly meeting. Both members and non-members are encouraged to lead a meeting.

Every year at their anniversary the Vass Group has an eating meeting with a special speaker. They just celebrated their 22nd year last month with Paul A. from Maryland speaking to a large audience of hungry and enthusiastic AA members.

A man in a hot air balloon realized he was lost. He yelled to a man on the ground. "Can you help me? I don't know where I am." The man replied: "you're in a hot air balloon hovering 30 feet above the ground ... between 40 and 41 degrees north latitude and between 59 & 60 degrees west longitude".

"You must be a sponsor", said the balloonist. "I am", said the man, "How did you know?"

"Well," answered the balloonist, "everything you told me is technically correct but I am still lost. Frankly, you've not been much help at all and might even have delayed my trip".

"You must be a sponsee", said the man. "I am", said the balloonist, "How did you know?"

"Well," replied the man, "you don't know where you are or where you're going. You have risen to where you are due to a lot of hot air. You are expecting other people to solve your problem and the fact is that you are in exactly the same position you were in before we met, but, somehow. now it's my fault".

CARRYING THE MESSAGE



This article was written and submitted to the Newsletter by the 11 year old son of one of our Vass members.

THANK YOURSELF

Hi, my name is Travis and I would like to tell you about all the things that I understand about AA point of view.

Ever since me and my dad started routing together to get into this program the only thing that I have been wondering is how he did it. I believe I understand that a lot better than before now and I'm thankful for that. Otherwise I would have no idea why I was trying to get my dad in this program.

All these meetings have actually taught me that I should not follow the same

path that my dad did. It is also telling my dad that one of the reasons that he started is because of me.

Just to know that my dad cares that much about me is very pleasing. To have a dad that has had this disease for so long and for him to give that addiction up for me is very happy to know to me.

I would just like to say to any beginners out there that once you have gotten your white chip and you have a few of these glorious meetings under your belt that you will be just fine.

This has helped my dad a whole lot and for you to start it means a lot to the AA members. We all love to accept members so we can all relate to each other ...as guidance for one Another.

When you start AA don't ever forget why you're in it. !!

STAY SOBER!

By: Travis H.
Raleigh, NC

ANSWERING SERVICE UPDATE

It is September and time for our yearly update of the 12th Step Answering Service list.

If you are currently on the list your name will remain active unless you tell us otherwise.

Anyone who is a member of AA in Moore County and has more than one year of sobriety is eligible and **ENCOURAGED** to be on the list.

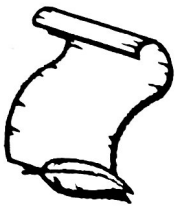
If you are interested in being on the list or need to be taken off, please contact:

Deirdre, at
Lacasseb@Pinehurst.net

Note: It often takes the ans. service operator 10 or more calls to reach one of our members who is available to make contact with the caller.

That is why a large list of AA members is crucial.
WE NEED EACH and EVERYONE OF YOU!

MEMBERS MUSINGS



The views expressed in "Member's Musings" are exclusively those of the individual writers. This is what makes for some fascinating reading but does not necessarily reflect the opinions of all AA members as a whole.

This month we present 2 articles written by our AA members in Moore County.

Does anybody care?

"Quite a few years ago at a weekend conference in Boca Raton, Fl., an old-timer from Chicago said something that caught my attention. He voiced his concern about the failure of Alcoholics Anonymous. Everybody knows that today less than 10% of the AA membership will stay

sober. Compare this to the 75% recovery rate in 1955 (Forward to 2nd Edition, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.)*

My question is: Does anybody CARE about this ongoing failure rate, and are you willing to do something about it...or are you part of the problem rather than part of the solution?

At Boca Raton, that old-timer put it this way, "Either AA doesn't work, or else we're not teaching it right. I choose to believe that AA works. So we must be teaching it wrong."

I could go on and on about this problem, but I'll keep it short and simple. We are dealing with life & death. Alcoholics are dying unnecessarily of alcoholism. They're dying sitting in meetings of AA. And the reason they're dying is because they weren't taught, & didn't hear, the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

What were newcomers being taught back in 1955 when AA's recovery rate was 75%, that they're not being taught today?

What's going on here? Why are sober alcoholics sitting in AA meetings and at the same time dying of alcoholism? Recently I asked that question and got the response, "AA is for people who want it". In other words, "I don't care".

I've heard too many selfish and self-centered remarks like, "I've got my sobriety so screw the rest of them". I've heard stupid discussion topics like: "How do you make yourself happy?" I've been to Big Book and 12th Step study groups where nobody learns the AA program. Instead, they concentrate on humorous anecdotes or tales of woe. Is this quality sobriety or is it just being DRY?...which means dying of alcoholism.

"Either AA doesn't work or we are not teaching it right." My name is George, I'm an alcoholic. If you don't care that sober alcoholics are dying unnecessarily, I won't attempt to dissuade you. But, if you do care, please contact me at the Aberdeen Bldg, 6pm on Monday evenings. Thanks".

* *****
Forward to the 2nd Edition
of *Alcoholics Anonymous*,
written by Bill Wilson:

“Of alcoholics who came to A.A. and really tried, 50% got sober at once and remained this way: 25% sobered up after some relapses, and among the remainder, those who stayed with A.A. showed improvement. Other thousands came to a few A.A. meetings and at first decided they didn’t want the program. But great numbers of these - about two out of three - began to return as time passed.”

PEACE

“We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace”. (1)

That is what I was seeking for all my life...a life that was driven by fear. I thought I could overcome fear with power and materiality. Though I realized those material goals I did not have one day of peace. In fact, the more material things I had,

the more I needed.

Instead of overcoming fear it grew worse and there were new fears. Fear of never having enough and fear of holding on to what I had. Ultimately fear actually began to manifest itself as a physical pain. Two heart catheterization procedures led doctors to conclude the pain was due to acute anxiety.

My new solution was predictable. Alcohol made me feel powerful and numbed the pain...if only for awhile. This solution, like materiality, became an obsession which led to craving for increased quantities and constant daily use of alcohol and other substances.

But, when the effects of these mind-altering substances wore off the fear and pain were worse than ever. Fear had driven me to despair.

My “final solution” seemed obvious to the alcoholic. Death would end the fear and pain. In fact, if I could choose how to die it

seemed I had the ultimate power over my greatest fear and freedom from pain. So I literally set about to kill myself drinking and using.

Every time I picked up a drink or a drug my goal was to get high, pass out “peacefully” and die happy. The consequences for this new “solution” were predictable and inevitable ... incarceration in mental hospitals, jails, loss of relationships with family & friends and, finally, the loss of the materiality I selfishly squandered.

I had failed. Everything was gone except for fear and pain, exacerbated by the constant obsession and craving to drink and use; but, I lacked the means and desire to continue.

In desperation...trembling & sobbing uncontrollably, I did Steps 1, 2 and 3 and had a spiritual experience. For the first time in my life I had aligned my will with God’s will and peace came to mea peace I had never felt, yet it seemed familiar.

In that moment, when time stood still for almost eight hours by the clock, I felt His power. I was bathed in a light which felt like unconditional love. Here there was no fear and the depression and craving were gone.

That was twenty months ago and today I have peace. I keep that peace and overcome fear and the obsession to drink and use with God's help through the simple, spiritual program of Alcoholics Anonymous. "The spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it." (2)

I once asked Douglas how he maintained the peace he seemed to have and he answered with a question: "have you memorized the Steps yet?"

The program of Alcoholics Anonymous helps me keep the peace I have today, as well as the power over fear and the obsession to drink and use....God's power, not mine. I keep His power by praying for "knowledge of His will and the power to carry that out." (3)

Aligned with His will and His power how can I fail? Where is fear now? It simply fades away in His light like fog dissipates in the light of the sun.

What is God's Will? I get a one word answer, LOVE. The same unconditional love I felt in His light in that day twenty months ago. The same love we give to each other and to the newcomer. Honest, unselfish, pure (without expectations) love...God's love.

The power of His love that we share changes lives and we "come to know peace", the very peace promised by the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

"Happiness? It's promised, too" (4) For me it comes from accepting God's love and sharing it with others.

Submitted by Bob Q.

(1) (2) & (4) Big Book, pages 83, 84

(3) Big Book, Page 59 Step Eleven

F. Y. I.

Your Sandhills Intergroup updates the meeting schedules for the County of Moore three times a year, Jan. 1st, May 1st and Sept. 1st. (These are also the dates that we publish our Newsletter.)

New meetings and changes to the schedule are submitted to the Intergroup & Dean F. (Our Meeting Schedule & Website Chairman) makes the corrections and has the schedules printed. You will note that the date of revision is at the top right hand corner of the schedule.

It is important that we keep ONLY the current schedules in circulation. Please throw out any of the old ones and feel free to replenish your supply from those that are kept in the display unit in the entry of the Aberdeen Building.

The Intergroup works very diligently to assure the accuracy of the meeting lists and we thank you for your help.

TRAVELING HIGHLIGHTS



"Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends...this is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives."
Alcoholics Anonymous, pg 89,

Last weekend I sat in the skydome of Toronto with somewhere between 50 or 60 thousand other drunks.

The spiritual energy flowing through the building was overwhelming, with God obviously very much present.

As I looked out on the crowd I could not hold back the tears of joy and a sense of belonging. Here I sat, not a miracle, but part

of the miracle called Alcoholics Anonymous.

As I meditated on the wonder of our program I looked around and was struck by the number of people that have been reached by what started with two men.

In my short time of sobriety I have been blessed with a great many friends from all over the world. I was amazed that I ran into well over 100 of my friends in that large crowd over the weekend. It was great seeing people I've watched grow through sobriety there helping others.

What was even more special was that I left there having made so many more friends.

During a long moment of silence holding hands with close to 60,000 other drunks (most of us in tears), I got to reflect on all those I have met in this program and how much they have freely given to me.

I know the only debt I have

to pay is to give it back. If you are getting this you are in my heart and were with me the entire time at the International Conference, ...as you are every day.

This fellowship exists in the world everywhere, at all times, and for that I am grateful.

With love & service,
George W.

FIRST 100
1935-1939

"Never
have so many
owed so much
to so few."



SANDY HILLS

District 52 News

Our District has a new secretary, Paige I. Her phone #: 910-9445950. Contact Paige if you are not getting District news mailings.

District 52's CPC/PI ... (Co-operation with the Professional Community/ Public Information) and CFC (Correctional Facilities Committee) Service Committees meet on the last Saturday of each month at 9AM in the AA Aberdeen Bldg. Members wishing more information or to get actively involved are welcome to attend.

The CPC/PI Committee has been busy getting info out to the community and to the professionals who might need to refer prospective members to our meetings.

Volunteers from the Sandhills Intergroup supported their efforts by handing out Meeting Schedules to all the local Hotels and Motels before the US Open this year. CPC/PI arranged for GSO Public Service

Announcements to be aired on Radio Stations STAR 102.5FM, 550AM and WEEB 990FM covering Southern Pines & are working on the Sanford & Laurinburg areas.

Another project is to provide a pocket-sized meeting list covering all five Counties of District 52 & publish it's own Web site.

The CFC has been established with George W as Chairman to *Carry the Message Behind the Walls*. George & his group are looking for additional help. Call George 910-987-5146 or come to the next mtg.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fall Election Assembly ...
Nov. 17-19 Raleigh Hilton

Dist. 52 Quarterly Mtgs.
Sept. 17th & Dec. 10th
Aberdeen AA Building.

WHAT IS INTERGROUP

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

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 County.

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

Sandhills Intergroup provides:

A 24 hour answering service that will give meeting info. to the caller or will pass along the call to one of our AA members.

A Website that provides our meeting schedule & directions to meetings.

Meeting schedules and the Newsletter, both updated and printed every 4 months.

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