

Sandhills
Intergroup

NEWSLETTER



Volume 14, Number 3, September 1, 2015

FEATURES:

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

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

For the past 13 years the Sandhills Intergroup has been able to provide AA information and the view of its members via the Newsletter.

We couldn't do it without you and rely on you to supply articles that will be of interest to our readers. We hope you will continue to do so.

Have you been to meetings while traveling? Do you have AA gems that you want to share? Perhaps you've unearthed some AA information that will astound us.

Whatever you have to share we'd be happy to have you submit it for publication in our next Newsletter.

THANKS !!

MEMBERS

MUSINGS



The column title of this Newsletter staple leads different contributors to muse over a wide range of subject matter. I relate musings to quip, adages and slogans. It would therefore be fun to pass along a few musings which are all a bit off the beaten track.

I moved to North Carolina in 1990. That translates to having spent more than 80% of my time in the Old North State. The influence of the old boys from Raleigh on my processing of AA thought and discourse has been profound.

A few years into the Raleigh experience I crossed paths with two sage old-timers. John and Sam would greet me by saying "you're such a nice guy". My chest would puff out and the thought would come to mind that they really understood me. They

would not allow much time for self-congratulation as they would quickly pose the first musing ... "what's your hole card?" I asked what a hole card was and they stated that it was that secret defect that I tried to hide from others.

Those gents taught me that to improve my sobriety was to be open and share my shortcomings with my friends. John and Sam related that "your friends are the people who know your character defects and like you anyway".

Sam really irritated me when we first met. But the day came when I saw the method to his madness. I told him that I did not know what I did not know and asked him to be my sponsor. He looked at me and then stated a message worth remembering.

"Embrace your dark side", he said and he explained this phrase in a way that gave me a whole new appreciation for Steps 6 and 7. I realized I had given lip service to these Steps for eight years until Sam and John schooled me.

Sam also taught me the value of not intervening in others' journeys along the road of sobriety. I was sponsoring a young fellow for whom I perceived a rocky road ahead due to some of his decisions.

Sam asked me who I thought I was to interfere with this guys' right to gain wisdom in learning by making mistakes.

He simply said "leave them be. Let them come to you if they want" My life has gotten a lot easier since following that musing. Hands off the control panels works much better.

Hopefully this little article has led some of you to some of those things said in your journey which changed your life. As one of the first old-timers I knew once stated succinctly, "Kid, the word around here is Hope"!

AA member: Brent G,

A....a

L....life

C....centered

O....on

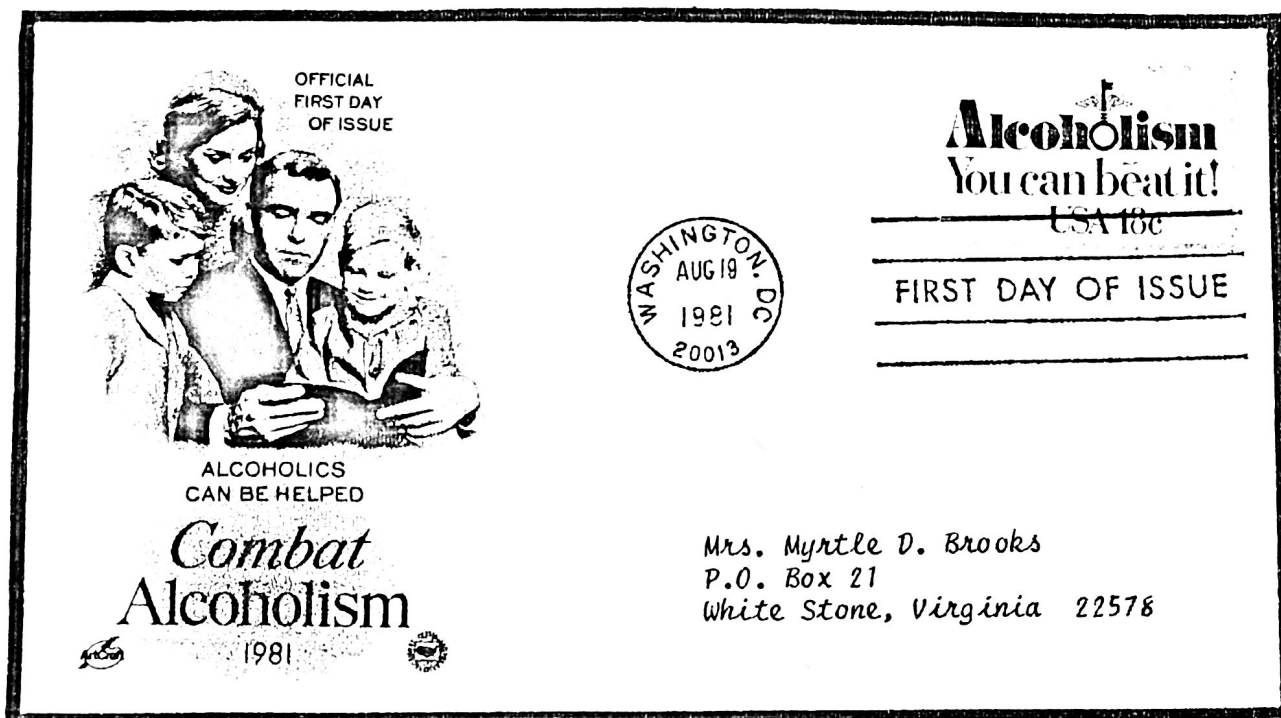
H....helping

O....others

L....live

I....in

C....comfort



HISTORICAL FACTS OF A. A.

In 1981 Nancy Reagan became the first lady of the United States. Her major contribution during her husband/s reign was to champion the movement to fight the use of recreational drugs and alcohol. This prevention program she founded was called "JUST SAY NO !" The effectiveness of this campaign is doubtful but at least she tried and it put a spotlight, for the first time, on the problem.

It was also in 1981 that 1st class postage in the U.S. was raised from 15 to 18 cents and a new stamp, "Alcoholism, You Can Beat It", was introduced.

The picture above is of an envelope stamped on the first day of issue, August 18, 1981. It shows a united family studiously reading from a "big" book. I wonder how many non-alcoholics would realize that it is actually the "Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous" ?

Carrying the Message



NO MATTER WHERE YOU GO

I have never skinned a cat, yet I am quite prepared to accept that there are a number of ways to accomplish the task. When I woke up to the fact that I am an alcoholic, and accepted that only a fool would continue to live like me, I mused at some length as to what I should do about it. After scrabbling about for a day or so, I can hardly dignify such an inchoate process with the title of research, I decided to check out AA.

My first meeting took place in the Quaker meeting rooms at 7:30pm. Like others before me I was not looking forward to it, and was highly skeptical about the outcome. I had been drinking quite heavily up to a couple of hours before and I resolved to say nothing, but to sit and listen, then scarper as soon as I could and go for a drink.

That's not quite how it went. It was a large meeting, 50 or

60 people, with lots of sharing without a scintilla of cat skinning. In fact, what I heard was, this is what you do, you do it precisely in this order, and there are no exceptions. I was discouraged by the overarching dependence on Christian orthodoxy, the liberal use of foul language, and a lengthy exchange of views on the phenomenon referred to as a "geographical". After the meeting I did, indeed, scarper quite rapidly, but, strangely I did not go for that drink.

The following day, reflecting on my experiences of the previous evening, I started to get angry. Clearly, AA may be alright for inflexible, tub-thumping, fundamentalist Christians, but a person like me does not need all that; I would do it on my own. And what was all this about a geographical? Apart from committing a mortal sin in using an adjective as a noun, surely removing yourself from surroundings conducive to drinking has to be a good thing.

In any event I have been a wanderer all my life. It started early, when at the age of 6 I was apprehended by a concerned citizen some 10 miles from my home and hauled before the local constabulary, who, after

suitable chastisement, returned me to my rightful domain, and to the wrath of my parents. Sadly, this was not to be my last encounter with the Boys in Blue. Roaming continued to be a big factor in my adult life, and to this day. So to my mind geographicals were the stuff of life and were not to be dismissed so casually.

Also, I was about to embark on another geographical, to visit the Sandhills of North Carolina. I determined to stop drinking and set off in good heart. I was sober when I fetched up at RDU, but my demeanor had changed dramatically. Quite simply I needed a drink, and I needed it badly. Fortunately mundane practical matters kept me from a drink that evening, but on waking at 4am there was only one thing on my mind. The wee hours have usually been a bleak place for me, but that morning, perhaps because I had been sober for almost 4 days, I admitted to myself that 9 hours on an airplane had changed nothing except latitude and longitude. In a state approaching desperation, I fired up the Internet, found AA, and rolled up to the Wilder building for the Noon meeting. That was 2 years ago and I still have not found it necessary to take a drink.

I can almost see you long-timers nodding sagely, thinking "now that arrogant clown knows exactly what we mean by a geographical" and I truly do. Well, almost.

I genuinely believe that the welcome and the fellowship I received at the Wilder bldg. has been a big contributor to my recovery, and I am sure that had I stayed in my home town I would not have gained the same level of support, nor would I have derived as much benefit from AA. I now recognize that the fundamental requirement is for a spiritual change, rather than a change of location. However in my case, without a geographical, I may not have put myself in the way of good things, and may never have recognized that my problem is a spiritual one. Perhaps we should never discount serendipity.

Or maybe the cat skimmers have a point !

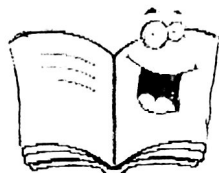
Written for the Newsletter by our English friend John K.

Thanks John and hurry back !



Little Known Facts of

AA



"The Drinker's Dictionary"

by Benjamin Franklin

Dr. Bob is credited with being the first person to use the term "pigeon" as it refers to the newcomer in AA.

Dr. Bob was an avid reader. He loved words and H. L. Mencken, who wrote "The American Language" was one of his favorites.

In that book Mencken points out that Benjamin Franklin, the author of "The Drinker's Dictionary", was the first American to wonder why tavern goers never referred to a patron as being drunk. They were "soused", "corned" or "stewed".

At age 30, as a successful owner of the Pennsylvania Gazette, Ben Franklin published "The Drinker's Dictionary", a collection of 225 words or phrases referring to imbibers.

.....

H. L. Mencken was greatly amused by "The Drinker's Dictionary". The actual entry in Franklin's dictionary that Mencken quotes says that people who hung around taverns referred to drunks as being *PIGEON-EYED*.

Thus, Dr. Bob, when referring to someone as his pigeon was referring lovingly to anyone who was pigeon-eyed.

Some members of AA may take offense at being compared to the lowly pigeon. Take heart. Dr. Bob, Mencken and Franklin could have made you a toad, a goose or a puppy.

Franklin was descriptive. He claimed that compulsive drinkers "eat a toad and a half for breakfast", or they are "dizzy as a goose" or "as good conditioned as a puppy".

The word "sponsee" (which Dr. Bob, H. L. Mencken and Benjamin Franklin would be quick to point out is not a word to be found in a dictionary) seems to have replaced "pigeon" in modern AA.

What hasn't changed is that "pigeons" or "sponsees" who don't drink don't get drunk !!

.....

TRAVEL HIGHLIGHTS



HAPPY 80th BIRTHDAY

AA

The 2015 International A A Convention was a HUGE success and a large number of our Moore County members were in attendance. The excitement and joy that they experienced there will be with them forever.

There are, however, many of us who could not make it to Atlanta so the Newsletter asked our "roving reporter" to circulate and bring back some gems to share with us. Here are 7 of them:

"This was my first International AA convention and it blew my mind. There were over 60 countries represented at the opening ceremony and over 70,000 alcoholics in the Georgia Dome at the closing ceremony. Powerful is an understatement".

Rebecca R.

"I feel blessed to have attended my third International AA Convention. Words cannot capture the energy and enthusiasm that surrounds you for four wonderful days. Sharing the experience with special friends and family members, hearing speakers, and attending meetings led by wonderful members are a few of my highlights.

The biggest highlight was hearing an unbelievable speaker at the closing ceremony share his truly touching journey in AA".

Beth F.

"A moment of silence for the still suffering alcoholic followed by the Serenity Prayer takes on new meaning when seventy thousand people are involved. Experiencing the power of this program on that scale is life changing; you never want to miss it again".

Mathew P.

"I have to say if there was one thing that made this year's International Convention in Atlanta so special for me; it was the two amazing people that I traveled to and around the convention with. I

was with someone with long term recovery, 51 years, and another friend with 3 years.

Watching the amazement in the new person's eyes as she was able to see AA people from all over the world meeting together in peace with the same unity and love that we see in AA on a group level. Secondly, my friend with 51 years, walking around with joy and amazement as if it were his first International Convention, being recognized every 30 steps we took."

Taylor C.

"I am filled with gratitude to have had the opportunity to experience such an awe inspiring event. I am filled with a sense of peace and hope that will stay with me on this journey, one day at a time. Simply and truly amazing.

McKenzie H.

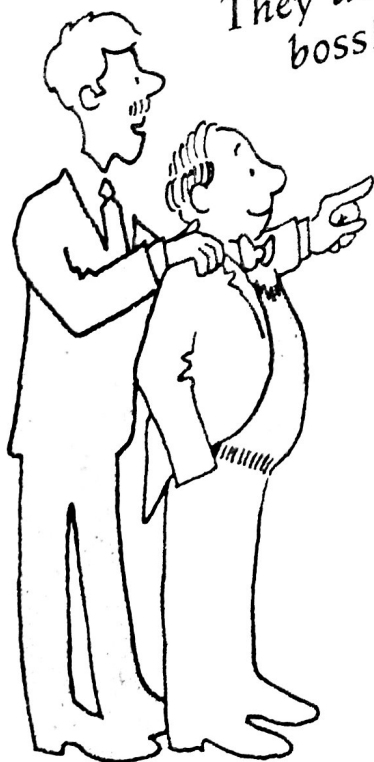
"The International Conference in Atlanta, Ga. Was powerful to me. So many people coming together and being friendly and respectful to all ... people from all over the world. Truly amazing".

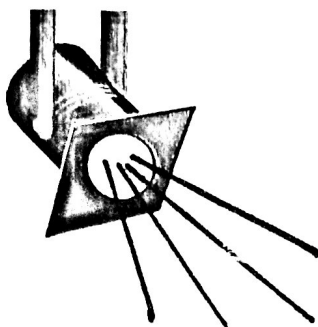
Karen T.

"A moment of silence for the still suffering alcoholic ... in a room filled with 50,000 + people; you could feel a higher power at work. A young man bearing his soul and describing how truly free he now is, even though serving time in prison, because another alcoholic reached out his hand. The power of the program was never more meaningful to me. I am very grateful I had the privilege to be at the AA International Convention celebrating 80 years of AA.

Karen P.

*They lead us
by example.
They don't
boss!*





SPOTLIGHT ON OUR

GROUPS

The Early Risers Group

If you are an early riser this is the meeting for you.

Ever since its inception four years ago the "Early Risers Group" has been host to a large group of AA members needing a good head start to the day.

The "Early Risers Group" has a closed discussion format and the group conscience defined the meeting's purpose as:

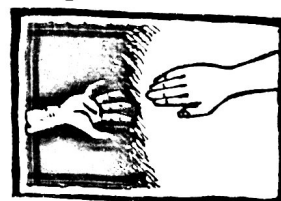
"The 'Early Risers Group' values the presence of everyone and believes each of us sharing our experience, strength and hope is important to helping everybody.

Whether we have days, weeks or months of sobriety or many years, our experience will always be a tremendous source of strength and hope for others. We encourage everyone to contribute."

Anyone with a desire to stop drinking is welcome. The "Early Risers Group" regulars represent a broad cross section of sobriety, ranging from newcomers to those with many years and the group thrives on the sharing of their individual experience.

Early morning can present scheduling demands for the working alcoholic so coming late or having to leave early is perfectly OK and requires no apology.

The hand of AA is extended by the "Early Risers Group" every Monday thru Saturday at 7:30 am in the Aberdeen Building.



They look forward to meeting you !

Editor's note:

When the "Early Risers Group" started in 2011 there were skeptics in our AA community who wondered if it would last.

Happily the group has grown and is now one of the most highly attended meetings in Moore County.

DISTRICT 52 **NEWS**

District 52 **Business meeting**

October 4th
Sunday - 2 pm
Aberdeen building

Two workshops:

“Safety in the rooms”
and
“Anonymity protection
in the digital world”

Plus: Covered Dish

If you have any ideas for a workshop topic you'd like to see the District explore please contact any officer of the District, or better still ... attend the next business meeting.

The gift of sobriety

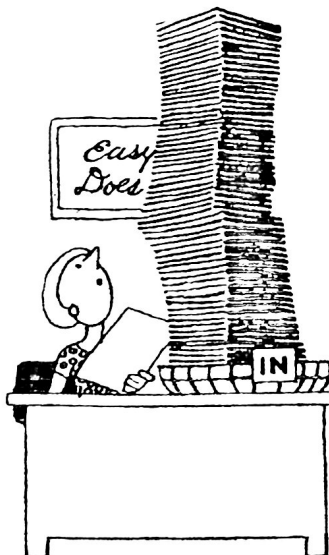
To KEEP IT ... we must
GIVE It AWAY

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. They also attend Area (State) assemblies twice a year.



KEEP IT SIMPLE

Sandhills Intergroup

A central office established to aid all the groups and meetings in Moore County in the common purpose of carrying the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

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

- 1) 24 hr. Answering Serv.
- 2) A Website
- 3) Moore Co. Meeting List
- 4) Publish a Newsletter
- 5) P. I. Committee

Published & distributed by

Sandhills Intergroup
PO Box 2513
Southern Pines, NC 28388
1-800-496-1742

www.moorecountyyaa.org

E-mail:
Postmaster@moorecountyyaa.org
