



Newsletter

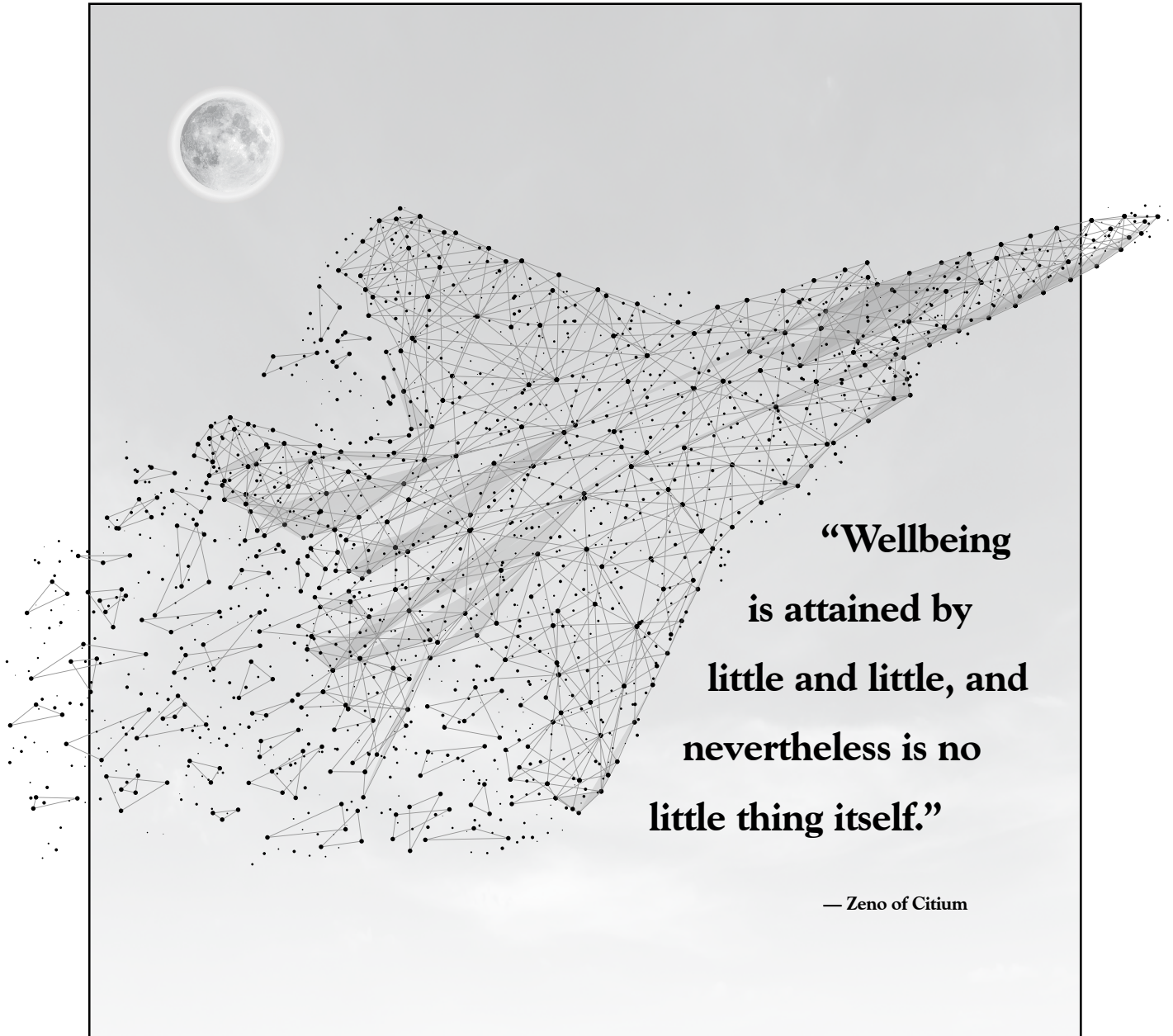
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Vol.7 No. 2 May 2023

S A N D H I L L S I N T E R G R O U P

The LITTLE Issue



THE SERENITY PRAYER - WHAT DOES IT MEAN? | MY STORY

INSPIRATION FROM THE ROOMS

DEAR FRIENDS | A VIRTUAL OFFICE?

Remembering David B.

David B. passed away in April 2023. this article was written by him in 2018 and we reprint it here in remembrance.

The Serenity Prayer - What Does It Mean?

The "Serenity Prayer" is one of the most well-known prayers of our time. It is the common name for a prayer originally written by theologian Reinhold Niebuhr in the late 1930s to early 1940s. Research suggests that Niebuhr wrote the prayer as part of a sermon he was giving.

While there is some controversy as to whether Niebuhr was the original author or not, Elisabeth Sifton states in her book, *The Serenity Prayer*, published in 2003, quotes the following version as the original serenity prayer:

"God, give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things that should be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other."

According to researchers, it is believed that the first version of the serenity prayer was quoted from memory in a question to The New York Times Book Review dated July 12, 1942. The query requests the name of the prayer's author. In reply to the request, the Book Review identifies Reinhold Niebuhr as its author and quotes the prayer as follows:

"O God and Heavenly Father, Grant to us the serenity of mind to accept that which cannot be changed; the courage to change that which can be changed, and the wisdom to know the one from the other, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen."

The Serenity Prayer became much more widely known in the 1950s after it was adopted by Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). In 1950, the AA Grapevine, a popular AA magazine, also named Niebuhr as the author, and the current Alcoholics Anonymous website identifies Niebuhr as the prayer's originator. The Serenity Prayer has also been used in Narcotics Anonymous and other Twelve-step programs.

It is interesting to note, however, that the version of the serenity prayer

posted on the Alcoholics Anonymous website omits some of Niebuhr's original text:

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and (the) wisdom to know the difference."

Reinhold Niebuhr himself discusses the Serenity Prayer and how it came to be in his book, *The Essential Reinhold Niebuhr: Selected Essays and Addresses*. He states, "... The embarrassment, particularly, was occasioned by the incessant correspondence about a prayer I had composed years before, which the old Federal Council of Churches had used and which later was printed on small cards to give to soldiers. Subsequently Alcoholics Anonymous adopted it as its official prayer. The prayer reads: 'God, give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things that should be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.' ..."

Finally, Reinhold Niebuhr's daughter, Elisabeth Sifton, wrote a book about her father's famous serenity prayer entitled, *The Serenity Prayer: Faith and Politics in Times of Peace and War*. In the book, Elisabeth discusses the the story and circumstances around her father's writing of the serenity prayer, the wide range of versions of the prayer, and the true essence of the serenity prayer's meaning.



References to the Serenity Prayer

The serenity prayer is referenced in Dan Brown's book *Angels & Demons*. • The back cover of the Neil Young's album entitled *Re-ac-tor* includes the serenity prayer in Latin. • Whitney Houston's debut album, *Whitney* includes a reference to the serenity prayer on the rear cover. • The 70's rock group, Boston, sings about the serenity prayer in the song, *Higher Power*. • Sinéad O'Connor, refers in book, *Slaughterhouse Five*. • The serenity prayer has even made its way into the gaming world. In the well-known game, *World of Warcraft: The Burning Crusade*, one of the Blood Elves recites the serenity prayer. • In 2004, punk band *Blood for Blood* titled their album *Serenity*, sings a song about the serenity prayer on track 2 of their album, and the lead singer recites the serenity prayer on the first and last tracks of the album. • Finally, Olivia Newton John's Album, *Stronger Than Before*, includes a song entitled *Serenity*, and references the serenity prayer within it.

The Serenity Prayer

(original)

God, give us grace to accept with serenity
the things that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things
which should be changed,
and the Wisdom to distinguish
the one from the other.

Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,
Taking, as Jesus did,
This sinful world as it is,
Not as I would have it,
Trusting that You will make all things right,
If I surrender to Your will,
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy with You forever in the next.

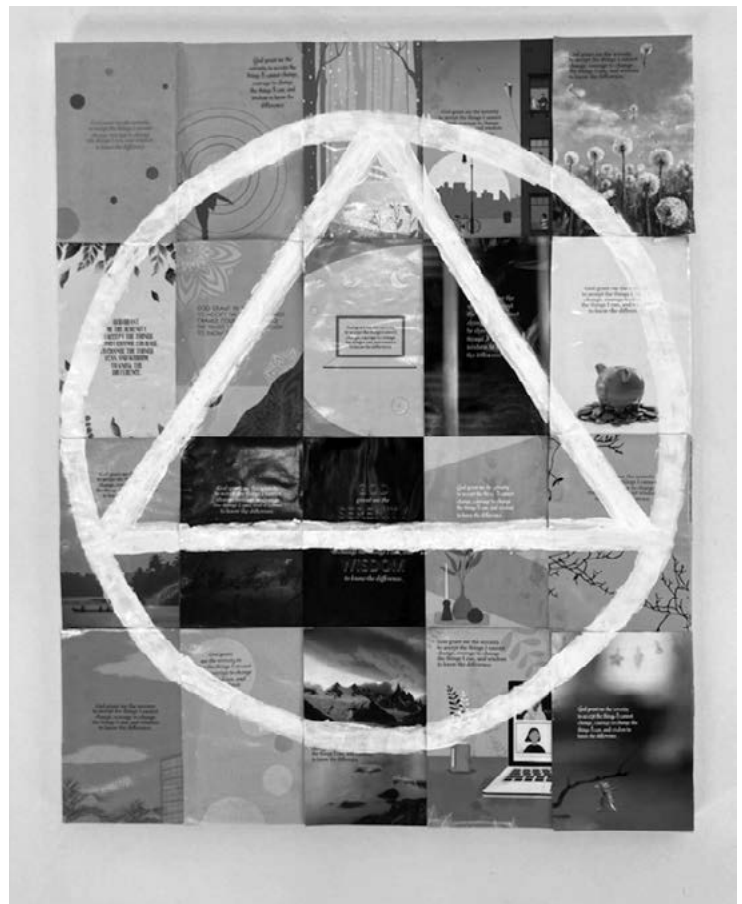
– Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971)

AA Thought for the Day

Since I've been putting sobriety into my life, I've been getting a lot of good things. I can describe it best as a kind of quiet satisfaction. I feel good. I feel right with the world—on the right side of the fence. As long as I put sobriety into my life, almost everything I take out is good. The satisfaction you get out of living a sober life is made up of a lot of little things. You have the ambition to do things you didn't feel like doing when you were drinking. Am I getting satisfaction out of living a sober life?

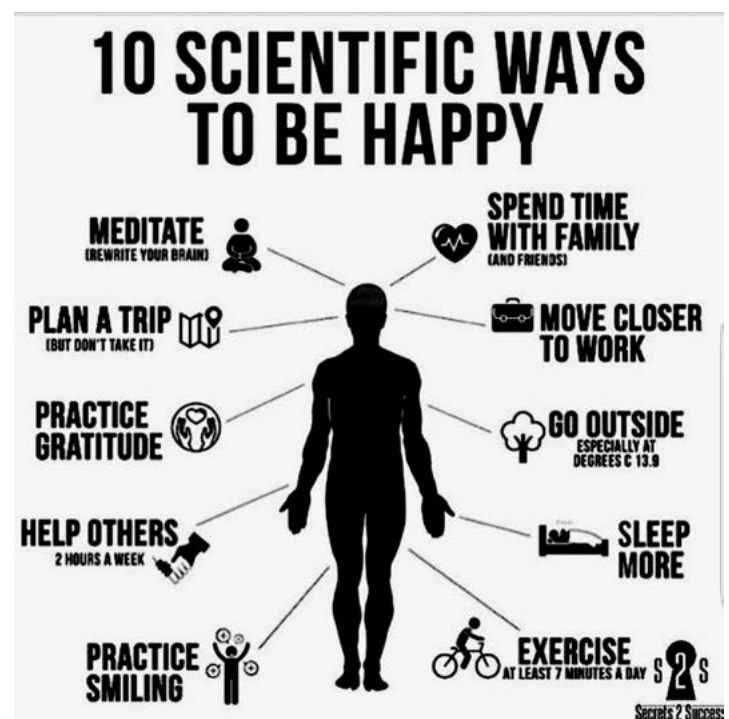
The little things?
The little moments?
They aren't little.

– Jon Kabat-Zinn



New art in the Wilder Building! The universal AA symbol in white over many colorful cards that all feature a peaceful scene and the Serenity Prayer. Take a minute to feel the calming presence next time you visit the Wilder Building.

Does anyone know who the artist is?



My Story

I was drinking every day, earlier and earlier in the day until I fell asleep or passed out depending on the day. I found myself thinking it would be better not to be here than live like this. I was isolated, not really talking to people about the hell I was going through, just going to work coming home and drowning my sorrows, so it was all less overwhelming. Then I had the thought that instead of just going on and hopefully dying soon, that I could try to get more help first. I was in therapy (and still am to this day), but I needed something else. To quit drinking was not on my list of what I needed at that time. I thought that once my life got better I wouldn't need to drink so much. I was an atheist and the only thing I hadn't really looked into was if there was a point to living beyond what I had experienced so far. I mean why bother with all this overwhelming

stuff of life at all?

I looked into it and found that spiritual principles were real to me and were a way I could heal. Then I admitted to my therapist I was

The key to the first months was just listening to the words, reading sobriety literature, mainly other's stories, and not judging but taking what I needed and leaving the rest.

drinking every day and my road to sobriety began. I was able to see that I hadn't tried sobriety yet, as a way to feel better and like life was worth living. I bit the bullet and went to a meeting. I saw the 12 steps, heard what people shared, and saw the spiritual principles I had been learning about. I chose not to interpret what I was hearing in a cynical way, because AA was so accessible, meetings all the time, that if I was cynical about what I was hearing or reading, then AA would not be there and my chances of getting and staying sober without daily connection to sober alcoholics would be non-existent. I could not do this on my own. I needed to find people I could trust who were not judging me, but wanted to help me, not preach at me. They were in the rooms, I just needed to talk with people and find the one's I could trust. I thought one day I might be able to help someone else. The key to the first months was just listening to the words, reading sobriety literature, mainly other's stories, and not judging but taking what I needed and leaving the rest. I am not religious, but I learned AA is not religious although people in meetings can sound that way, sometimes a lot. That is because they are religious and their religion helps them stay sober, not because AA is trying to get me to believe in a God or any God. Other people's opinions



are not for me if they are not truly helpful to my sobriety (although they may be helpful for someone else's sobriety). I kept searching for the sober people I could connect with and stayed with the women. I got a sponsor once I found someone who was willing to sponsor and then I really felt like I was getting in the middle of the boat. Just don't drink today. Do whatever you need to stay away from the first drink today. I did a lot of crafting and relaxing and gradually was able to do more and more 'adulging.' I found I could not force it. I needed to stay in a positive state of mind, not judging myself, knowing that I was loved and cared for and that my life had a healthy path if I would just surrender and stop trying to run the show, ask for help, and stay sober just for today. I learned to pause and pray, then wait until it was the right time to proceed, to just let it happen instead of forcing things because I should do them (for those things that could wait). I learned to tell my sponsor or others I trusted with some time in sobriety, what was really bothering me so that it would be cut in half. Over time, less and less people, places, and things bother me. Really working a sobriety program every day has helped me to heal so much. I don't want to go back.

I just figured out what it means to walk by faith and not by sight.

By sitting with and embracing moments of discomfort with curiosity and gratitude - trusting my Higher Power to guide me through those moments to the other side - I will truly be walking by faith and not by sight.

- Brandee D.



If it is right, it happens - the main thing is not to hurry. Nothing good gets away.

- John Steinbeck

Inspiration From the Rooms

Each month at hundreds of meetings in the Sandhills, newcomers and veteran AA'ers share their experience, strength and hope. It is through these meetings that AA'ers find the courage and willingness to continue to heal and to become a person who actively lives the 12 step program. They openly share their grief and pain and look for solutions on how to deal with the daily struggles that affect all of us. **Read what some AA'ers had to say recently.**

"It was 5 years being sober before I really knew the truth in my heart. Before I really accepted myself and my alcoholism. Today I can say, "My name is John and I am an alcoholic."

"I thought that humility was really going to hurt. I am so happy to learn that humility makes me feel better about myself. And about others."

"I just can't assume that I'm not going to drink again. I'm an alcoholic. I am scared to get over-confident. That's why I keep coming to meetings. And to see my friends!"

"In this program I have learned not just how to live, but to thrive. I've learned how to handle my relationships with my family and with those at work. I've also learned how to look in the mirror without disgust"

"The thought of being "powerless" was a real stumbling block for me to enter these doors. To face the reality of what my life had become - empty, scary and revolving around where to get the next drink. Once I admitted that I was in fact "powerless" and "my life had become unmanageable", then I began to heal."

"When I first went to an AA meeting I was just a "visitor". I listened to others and what they had lost - so much. I didn't think I had lost anything at all. Well, after going to more meetings I realized that I had lost a lot. I had lost my self-respect and my soul."

"Don't worry. Spiritual awareness will come to you, on your own timetable. For now it's easy. Don't drink. Go to a meeting and listen. And keep coming back."

- Anonymous

THOUGHT TO PONDER

Right actions for the future are the best apologies for wrong ones in the past.

January 28, 2023

Primary Purpose Group and Wilder Building

Dear Friends,

As I write this note I can't believe it's been 30 days since Doug passed away.

On June 28th, 2021, Doug asked me to take him to the hospital for detox, he wanted to try and get sober again. Each night when I would visit, he would say he was planning to attend the AA meetings that were provided on site. There was one AA group that resonated with him during his treatment, we soon figured out it was the PPG group which eventually became his home group. After his discharge, he was determined to attend 90 meetings in 90 days and our first official AA meeting was at the Wilder building where he picked up his white chip. There were many days that we attended two or more meetings, he was determined to conquer this alcoholic lifestyle that haunted him for so many years. He wore out the serenity prayer trying to stay on track!

In the early days of his sobriety, he loved showing up before the PPG meeting to make coffee, set up snacks and do whatever he could to help. Doug really enjoyed the Wilder building big book, the lunch time meetings as well as the weekend early riser meetings. As his time in sobriety grew, he volunteered for detox at the same hospital that treated him just a few months prior, he wanted to bring hope to another alcoholic just like hope was shared with him. He loved the various daily morning texts with AA thoughts and God's promises as he set a prayerful intention for his day.

One of his proudest moments was sharing his story as a speaker for his home group, I still listen to it!

His AA family continued to inspire him to stay sober as they shared their stories of struggles and success, it truly is one day at a time.

To all those folks who have picked up multiple white chips, you are warriors. Doug tried numerous times over many years to drink in moderation, get sober and stay sober---please keep showing up and keep the faith. Both the Wilder building community and Primary Purpose Group are a remarkable team of people that will surround you with unwavering support and love, they have an energy and vibe that will make you feel right at home.

In sobriety Doug was blessed with a happiness and peace which eluded him for many years. Even as he was battling his illness, he practiced gratitude and his faith never wavered. He passed away with 18 months of sobriety for which I am so proud.

I can't find the right words to express my thanks and gratitude as you showered us with love, prayers and support during Doug's sobriety journey and as he battled this aggressive cancer which took him too soon from us.

I will continue to keep you in my prayers and look forward to seeing you guys soon.

*Love
Yvonne
XD*

Our A.A. Hotline: An Opportunity for Service - A Virtual Office?

Yes, Moore County A.A. does have a phone number: 910-420-0575. But – as most of you know – we don't have a physical office staffed by a receptionist 24-7. What we do have is a dedicated group of recovering alcoholics who are helping to carry the message in the Sandhills by having their phone number listed on our Google Voice account.

On the rare occasion that no one is available to answer at the time of the call, a pleasant voice says, "The Google subscriber you have called is not available. Please leave a message after the tone." So we can check our voicemail messages regularly, and return calls to anyone who's left a number.

What kinds of calls do we get?

My experience after about three years "on the job" is that I can provide about 95% of the information and support that people were seeking. Most of the questions concern when and where a particular meeting would be held (or if a group listed on the schedule was in fact still meeting), whether it was in-person or online, and in some cases what was the passcode for an online meeting.

The best resource for this kind of information is the fairly complete and accurate list available on our website: <https://moorecountyyaa.org>. Note that we include information not only for Moore County meetings but those in Hoke, Richmond, Lee and Scotland Counties as well.

What's next?

Those of us who answer these calls will attest to how rewarding it can be. Yes, I find satisfaction in knowing that I'm playing a small part in supporting this vital commitment for our area: "When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that, I am responsible." But answering Hotline calls is also a regular way to confirm for myself my identity as an alcoholic. And that is essential for continuing my own recovery.

If you think you might be interested in this form of service work, please get in touch with us at moorecountyyaa@gmail.com.

Here are a few typical questions, with some of the sources that we turn to for answers:

"I just moved here, and I was wondering about meetings in the area."

A referral to the online schedule at the website is a good place to start. And it's nice to be able to say that the Wilder Buildings hosts several meetings every day of the week, spanning a variety of formats.

"I'm interested in attending a meeting ... How do I sign up?"

It's also nice to be able to say that there's no admissions procedure! Still, this can be a good opportunity to explain the difference between an Open and a Closed meeting.

"I'm trying to get my license back after a DWI charge ... Where can I take the classes?" This is a more serious misunderstanding! Usually I send the caller back to their probation officer or other court official to get a clearer picture of what exactly is required.

"I found your number on the Internet. Can you tell me if there's a meeting in Halifax County tonight?" One approach is to find a diplomatic way to ask, "If you could Google aa hotline, do you think you do a search on aa meetings halifax county?!" But if I'm home and have a little time, I'll head for my computer and search for meetings not listed on our regular schedule.

"I'm a nursing student, and one of my course requirements is to attend an A.A. meeting. What do I need to do?" We get similar requests from students in psychology and social work, as well as ministers who'd like a fuller understanding of the program. After explaining the distinction between Open and Closed meetings, this is another time when the online schedule is a good reference.

"My mother has been in A.A. for 20 years, but she's not very mobile and can't get out to meetings. Can someone give her a call from time to time just to chat?"

While Intergroup doesn't have a comprehensive database with names and numbers of folks willing to make such calls, each of us has developed our own list of women and men who are willing to reach out this way.

"I've lost my license and really need to get to a meeting. Is there someone who can give me a ride?"

Even more complicated. Sometimes all I can do is explain that our resources are limited, and we're not really set up to provide transportation. But on other occasions I've sent an email blast to my list of A.A. contacts to see if anyone's in a position to call the person, and make their own honest assessment about whether they can offer a ride.



HOTLINE

Finally there are those rare calls when someone needs a level of professional help that's clearly beyond what we can emotionally, ethically, or legally provide. We've compiled a brief directory of more suitable substance-abuse and addiction-recovery resources in Moore County, and making a referral is the right thing to do.

Sandhills Intergroup

The Sandhills Intergroup is a central office established to aid groups and meetings in Moore County carry the AA message to alcoholics who still suffer.

We provide:

Answering service **(910) 420-0575** - General AA questions and meeting information are provided. In case of an emergency please dial 911.

Website - **www.MooreCountyAA.org**

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We are funded solely by the AA groups in our county and we **NEED, ASK** and **THANK YOU** for your contributions and input.

Visit our website for the current **MEETING SCHEDULE**
www.MooreCountyAA.org

Have a question? Answers are a phone call away (910) 420-0575

WANTED! YOUR STORY

The Sandhills Intergroup Newsletter wants to hear from
YOU!

We want to hear your stories,
inspirational messages and words of wisdom.
Your experience, strength and hope is needed
to build a better newsletter for all AA'ers.
Our next issue will be published September 2023.

Send submissions to:
SandhillsNews@gmail.com

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We meet at 9am the first Saturday of each month via Zoom or in person at 504 Wilder Ave, Aberdeen.

All AA'ers Welcome!

EMAIL
moorecountyaa@gmail.com

ONLINE & PHONE MEETINGS AVAILABLE



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Visit
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AA District 52

*AA District 52 comprises Moore, Hoke, Richmond, Lee and Scotland Counties. Visit their website: **www.aanc52.org***

Published & Distributed by

Sandhills Intergroup | PO Box 2513 | Southern Pines, NC 28388 | (910) 420-0575