



Newsletter

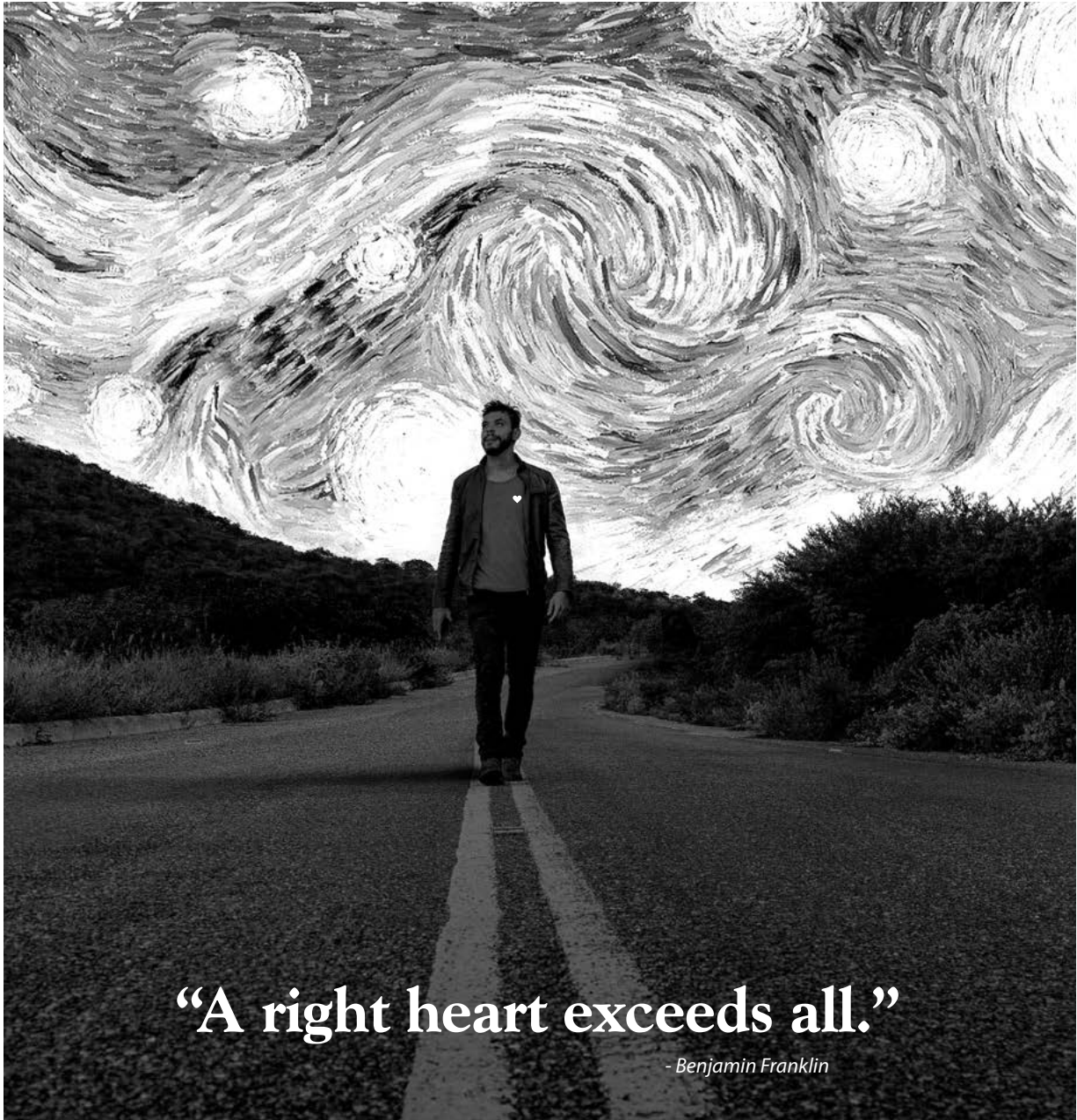
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Vol.7 No. 3 Sept 2023

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

The **HEART** Issue



“A right heart exceeds all.”

- Benjamin Franklin

SOBRIETY AND CONSCIOUS CONTACT | 12 STEP PRAYERS OF AA
FINDING MYSELF | INSPIRATION FROM THE ROOMS
GREETINGS TO OUR FRIENDS | A-Z OF DISEASE AND RECOVERY

Sobriety and Conscious Contact

Sobriety is always one day at a time. It does not matter how many twenty-four hours get strung together, or how many years. It's often one minute, then one second at a time when it needs to be. It is only right now that everything is ok. It is only right now that I connect with my higher power. I cannot do it tomorrow. I cannot do it yesterday. It is only through my surrender and willingness, right then and there, that I am able to maintain a conscious contact with my higher power. I am never given more than I can handle and if I ask for help, I get it from everywhere, because my higher power is everywhere. My conscious contact, which is my connection with my higher power, whom I call God, is inside of me. Only I can do that. The rooms of AA continue to be the safe harbor that I come to in order to hear and feel God speak through others in the room. I am blessed today to sometimes be what other people come to hear when God speaks through me.

Many years ago, when I first entered AA, I didn't have any idea of how sick I was. I had no clue how early on it was that I began making repeated insane choices in my life. These insane behaviors always led me right back to hopelessness, losing myself and escaping into the bottle. It was a circle of my own making that always led to the same place.



A lefty, I was an extremely imaginative child and sensitive to energy and my surroundings. A middle child, I always felt alienated. I felt like the weird one, the one left out, the one that didn't fit in or do things like everyone else, that did everything backwards and the wrong way. I did not see my creativity or any good qualities in my highly sensitive nature. I didn't

understand that I was more tuned into animals, people's energy and the natural world than those around me. As a young person

I was a straight A student, wrote poetry, and passionately cared about humanity, the planet and her creatures. I had great goals of saving the world. Yet the world and the general culture did not see it the way I did. Polluting was normal, greed accepted and material king, along with eating terrible foods that destroyed animals, rainforests and trees, and the planet. At church I was told that babies that don't take communion will go to hell. Society obviously favored some and not others. As a teen something snapped and I went astray from society, which was compounded by my brother's early and tragic death. I'd already found that drinking took away all these painful feelings and realities that the world was messed up beyond repair, and that though I had a mission, I was rejected and could never save the world. At that point I just dove straight into the bottle. For the next ten years from my teens to a young adult, I ran to alcohol and increasingly hid my feelings from the world.

It was not long before I couldn't maintain my marriage or any relationship. I couldn't take care of myself, I couldn't tell the truth, I couldn't drive, and I distanced myself from all those close to me - including my family. I couldn't maintain work or school and was dying of liver disease. I was under 25. Looking back now I can see that my brain, socialization, body and mental skills didn't develop properly due to alcoholic stunting. My spirituality was a mental concept from the church that was alien to me. But something happened. I connected to a part of me that I had long ago walled myself off from.

“When someone shared their feelings, it was as if they were bearing my own soul.”

It was from feelings coming from this connection

somewhere deep within that lit my way into the rooms. It was there that I could really feel this peace inside of me. I felt it when listening to the people at the tables. I didn't understand it, and could only blindly trust it. But I did know what I was feeling, maybe for the first time in my life. Something larger was connecting with me, and I could see it also was in others that shared my affliction. The love and compassion were not conditional, was consistent when I sat still and opened to it, always persistently there and undeniable. I wanted more of that!

I went to many, many meetings those first months and years. Hope began to dawn, then blossom.

When someone shared their feelings, it was as if they were bearing my own soul. There was something about my consciously opening to my higher power and that contact and connection that enabled me to connect with other alcoholics on a very deep level. They were able to help me with whatever pain I had, and miraculously, I could help them. I began to see that it was through that same higher power, which was in them too, that through that coudous contact we could reach each other from our heart space. God spoke through them and through me. I was not only helped, but I now had value to others by speaking my heart, which I needed so desperately to do and had cut myself off from.

I could see that it did not matter which meeting I walked into. Someone would share the very thing that would turn it around for me and make me feel a part of, not alienated and weird and apart, as I felt most of my life.

As I learned and practiced the steps over and over, I started to see that the steps and their meaning grew as I grew, through my contact with my higher power. After years in the program, though to this day remains challenging to me, I began to connect with other people in my work, family and social life. I became comfortable with the fact that my higher power was always there and always answered my prayer for sobriety. I became more secure that every day sober was one that I could get through. As I stayed sober the Promises magically began to come about. I knew God removed my craving for alcohol and my shortcomings one after the other.

Despite many ongoing and challenging days, my life steadily got better. I earned a terminal degree in environmental science, became a passionate teacher and professor, served on and led committees for various environmental causes, served my family and helped with caregiving, and have led events for social groups. I have my own home that I care for, and am blessed with good health and a (mostly!) healthy emotional system. As I went through many successes and many very challenging times over the years, my connection with God was always there, as were the meetings.

As I grew up emotionally, cleared the mental fog and got strong physically, it began to dawn slowly that conscious, permanent contact with God inside me means I'm a piece of God. If I am a piece of God everyone else is, too. My relationship with God changed into one of trust, and one of communicating and listening. I can now feel compassion for others in the world, though it remains easier with other alcoholics who share my same pain. I have learned to pray and meditate my own way, which of course may be little different than how others do it! We do remain individuals and there are many unique and different ways that other alcoholics

find their own way. I help others through communicating inner feelings, challenges and they help me.

The way I pray and meditate is to 'open a space.' I simply embrace any repeating negative thoughts, or stinking thinking as it is so aptly called. I drop whatever I need and ask for it to be removed and that Thy

will be done, in best and highest alignment with all. I can do this anywhere and anytime. It is as handy as a light switch. It is a simple decision to drop my ceaseless butt kicking and shame and blame, which is a circle from others to me to others again to find some way to explain my feelings. When I open that space, meditation is to turn that light of attention on full wattage and connect as often or repeatedly as I need, to be fully ready for God to take it. With persistence God does take it, though it is up to me to turn that key.

Life remains a journey of change and learning. While things happen that are sometimes difficult, there is always hope. Repeated negative, codependent, painful and even crazy and obsessive thoughts still arise. I don't deny my feelings, though. If I have to feel them, I just ask God to be with me and I always have the love that surrounds me like a cocoon. I know it is there, that it will always be there.

- Amy O.



12 Step Prayers of AA

First Step Prayer (*honesty*)

Dear Lord,
I admit that I am powerless over my addiction.
I admit that my life is unmanageable when I try to control it.
Help me this day to understand
The true meaning of powerlessness.
Remove from me all denial of my addiction.

Second Step Prayer (*hope*)

Heavenly Father,
I know in my heart that only you can restore me to sanity.
I humbly ask that you remove all twisted thought &
Addictive behavior from me this day.
Heal my spirit & restore in me a clear mind.

Third Step Prayer (*surrender*)

God,
I offer myself to Thee
To build with me & to do with me as Thou wilt.
Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will.
Take away my difficulties,
That victory over them may bear witness
To those I would help of Thy Power,
Thy love & Thy way of life,
May I do Thy will always!

Fourth Step Prayer (*courage*)

Dear God,
It is I who has made my life a mess.
I have done it, but I cannot undo it.
My mistakes are mine &
I will begin a searching & fearless moral inventory.
I will write down my wrongs
But I will also include that which is good.
I pray for the strength to complete the task.

Fifth Step Prayer (*integrity*)

Higher Power,
My inventory has shown me who I am,
Yet I ask for Your help
In admitting my wrongs to another person & to You.
Assure me, & be with me, in this Step,
For without this Step I cannot progress in my recovery.
With Your help, I can do this, & I do it.

Sixth Step Prayer (*willingness*)

Dear God,
I am ready for Your help
In removing from me the defects of character
Which I now realize are an obstacle to my recovery.
Help me to continue being honest with myself &
Guide me toward spiritual & mental health.

Seventh Step Prayer (*humility*)

My Creator,
I am now willing that you should have all of me, good & bad.
I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of
character

Which stands in the way of my usefulness to you & my fellows.
Grant me strength, as I go out from here to do your bidding.

Eighth Step Prayer (*love*)

Higher Power,
I ask Your help in making my list of all those I have harmed.
I will take responsibility for my mistakes &
Be forgiving to others as You are forgiving to me.
Grant me the willingness to begin my restitution.
This I pray.

Ninth Step Prayer (*responsibility or the ability to respond*)

Higher Power,
I pray for the right attitude to make my amends,
Being ever mindful not to harm others in the process.
I ask for Your guidance in making indirect amends.
Most important, I will continue to make amends
By staying abstinent, helping others &
Growing in spiritual progress.

Tenth Step Prayer (*discipline*)

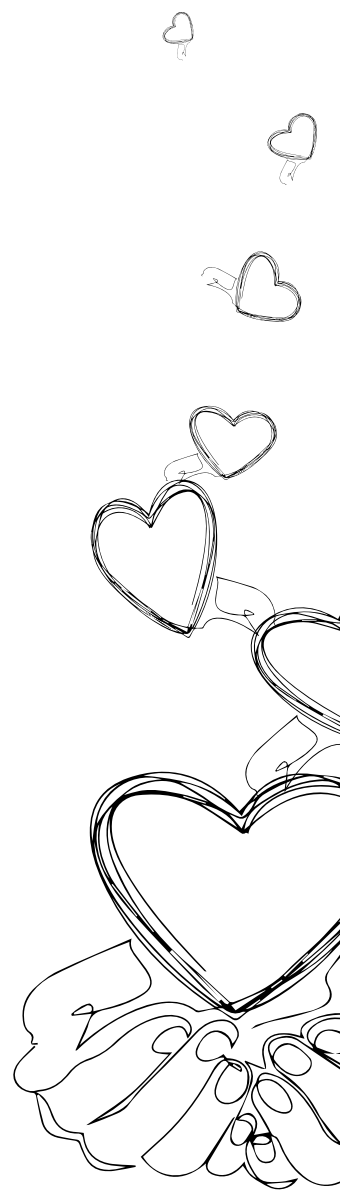
I pray I may continue:
To grow in understanding & effectiveness;
To take daily spot check inventories of myself;
To correct mistakes when I make them;
To take responsibility for my actions;
To be ever aware of my negative &
Self-defeating attitudes & behaviors;
To keep my willfulness in check;
To always remember I need Your help;
To keep love & tolerance of others as my code; &
To continue in daily prayer how I can best serve You,
My Higher Power.

Eleventh Step Prayer (*awareness*)

Higher Power, as I understand You,
I pray to keep my connection with You
Open & clear from the confusion of daily life.
Through my prayers & meditation I ask especially for
Freedom from self-will, rationalization, & wishful
thinking.
I pray for the guidance of correct thought & positive
action.
Your will Higher Power, not mine, be done.

Twelfth Step Prayer (*service*)

Dear God,
My spiritual awakening continues to unfold.
The help I have received I shall pass on & give to others,
Both in & out of the Fellowship.
For this opportunity I am grateful.
I pray most humbly to continue walking day by day
On the road of spiritual progress.
I pray for the inner strength & wisdom
To practice the principles of this way of life in all I do & say.
I need You, my friends, & the program every hour of every day.
This is a better way to live.



Finding Myself

I was lost. I was a hot mess. Drinking every day - rushing to the store right after work for a bottle of wine (or 2) so I could drink on my way home. A 20 minute drive, so it was not a good idea but I felt it was my reward, my way of "handling things". Moving to a new state, leaving behind 2 sick parents, raising 3 teenagers, a son off to college, an unemployed husband... Well, I was handling it, with my best friend, alcohol. Who needs human friends??



In treatment I was shocked when told that alcohol affects 3 things: the body, the mind, and the spirit. I sadly realized that I had no soul, no spiritual life, nothing there. I had disassociated from my inner self and let my alcoholic mind run wild and run the show. I was not a whole person anymore; I had let my core values seep away and replaced them with feelings of anger, pity and resentment.

This was a turning point for me. Did I really need a Higher Power? I felt God had let me down, forgotten me. Going to daily meetings I made the people in the rooms my Higher Power. Little by little, I came to understand that I was the one who had shut God out of my life.

The truth was that alcohol had done some twisted wreckage on my brain, turning my perception and understanding of life into an unreal, sordid world. I realized I needed to surrender. This was a huge step for me to walk away from a lifetime of alcohol; of using alcohol to calm my feelings, to comfort me, to ease my daily life and to be my reward for "handling it".

I started to listen to others in the meetings. So many times, their feelings were my feelings! Another shocking realization. These same people were nice to me, happy to talk with me and give me their phone numbers. It was comforting not to be alone, but still I didn't talk much. I was too afraid of saying the wrong thing and sounding stupid.

Now I am almost 4 years sober and I am filled with gratitude for the world around me. My family relations have vastly improved, I have many human friends, a great sponsor who "gets me", and I truly feel my authentic self. How did this miracle happen? Firstly, I have aligned myself and my will with God. I have learned to take things one day at a time and have no expectations. I find joy in every day, in the small things and in the big things. I have been listening more and talking less - it's not all about me! I am able to give comfort to others, to understand their challenges and to rejoice in their achievements. I've learned that my healing is a wonderful journey and I need to be involved in every moment. I know that I have been given a most precious gift and that is sobriety.

- Betsy Y.

Inspiration From the Rooms

Even in the hot summer days in the Sandhills, AA'ers came to meetings to share their experience, strength and hope with others. For many, it is our duty to attend, share and welcome Newcomers, as it says in the 12th Step: "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs". Living an honest, sober life is what we strive for, and a new happiness and contented life is our reward. Of course everyday life has its ups & downs, but this program helps us handle a sober life and make peace with our feelings of resentment, shame, and incompetence. Here's what some had to share on these topics.

"I'm here today because I don't want to drink today. I'm not a perfect person. Every day is a daily practice of surrendering to this disease. I've thought that maybe one day I can control this thing. I've tried to do it on my own and it doesn't work, it just gets worse."

"It's not the stopping drinking - I can do that. It's the staying sober that is the problem for me. I finally learned that I had to change ME. The more I practice the 12 Steps, the more that things in my life have changed. I'm inspired by the people around me in these rooms."

"Coming to meetings, listening and sharing. This has taught me what is my responsibility and what is not. This journey is for me - for me to save myself and to help others."

"It is through the tough times that we grow and prosper. You have to think on yourself and be willing to change. It helps if you believe in something, a Higher Power for some, and you just get over yourself. Serve others, be of service. I am grateful for my life today."

"I thank God that the obsession has been lifted for today. It's a daily maintenance of myself."

"I've never seen anyone's life get worse after they commit themselves to the AA program. The alcoholic will always be inside of me. But I don't need to listen to them. I don't need to drink today."

"Shame is being judgemental turned inward. Healing doesn't begin until forgiveness happens. And you have to remember to forgive yourself, too."

"We're not bad people trying to get good. We are sick people trying to get better from a fatal disease."

- Anonymous

THE WILDER BUILDING

504 Wilder Avenue, Aberdeen, NC

Greetings to our friends in recovery,

Hoping this note finds all of you somewhat sane and happy. Our thanks to Intergroup for allowing us to use this space to address a couple of issues pertaining to the Wilder building.

Our second tradition states, "For our group purposes there is but one ultimate authority-a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern." The steering committee does not arbitrarily make rules or create new guidelines. We have been blessed over the past couple of decades to have had trusted servants that possessed invaluable wisdom and experience. The group conscience has spoken and over time, policies have been established for the "common good." One such policy concerns pets accompanying their owners at meetings. Registered service dogs are definitely welcome; emotional support animals or pets are not. This guideline was established long ago to ensure that "all who attend" feel comfortable at meetings in our building. It was never adopted to exclude anyone. As individual members, we have the responsibility to never interfere with the growth of our friends in recovery. Your compliance to this policy is greatly appreciated.

Secondly, "Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." This is a tradition that we aspire to, however in reality, we struggle to achieve. With prices of everything escalating, it's hard to make ends meet. Only twice this year have our monthly contributions exceeded our monthly expenses. Please keep this in mind when the basket is being passed. Also, the holidays will be here before we know it. To help prepare for the additional expenses for our traditional Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners, we will be conducting a special contribution drive in September. We have done this the past two years and have been "blown away" by your generosity. Thanking you in advance for this year's support.

Thank you for taking time to read our little blog, and special thanks to Sherri for letting us occupy so much of her valuable space.



**Tell me and I
forget. Teach me
and I remember.
Involve me and
I learn.**

- Benjamin Franklin

*With Love in service,
Lynn, Mary Kay, and Kirk*

**Please Share
YOUR STORY**

The Sandhills Intergroup Newsletter wants to hear from

YOU!

Send submissions to:
SandhillsNews@gmail.com

A-Z of Disease and Recovery

	Progressive Disease		Progressive Recovery
A	Anti-social	A	Acceptance, Able
B	Bitter, Broken	B	Brave, Beauty
C	Chaos	C	Community
D	Death, Dishonest, Devastation	D	Delight
E	Ego	E	Enthusiasm
F	Fear, Frustration, False Pride	F	Fellowship, Freedom, Friendship, Faith
G	Gone	G	Gratitude, Grace
H	Hopeless	H	Honesty, Hope, Humility
I	Isolation, Institutions, Insecurity	I	Inspiration
J	Jails	J	Joy
K	Krazy	K	Kindness, Knowledge
L	Low self-esteem, Liver disease, Lonely	L	Love
M	Manipulation	M	Mindfulness, Meditative
N	Negativity	N	New Purpose
O	Overwhelmed	O	Open-Minded
P	Procrastination	P	Peace, Prayer, Patience
Q	Quaking	Q	Quiet
R	Running Away	R	Respected
S	Separation, Self-Loathing, Self-Centered	S	Strength, Serenity
T	Terror, Tremors, Thoughts of Suicide	T	Trust
U	Unkind, Unloveable	U	Understanding
V	Vacuum	V	Valuable, Vulnerable
W	Withering Away	W	Willingness
X	X-Rays	X	Xcellent
Y	Yearning	Y	Yippee!
Z	Zealous Drinking	Z	Zen, ZZZZ, sleeping better

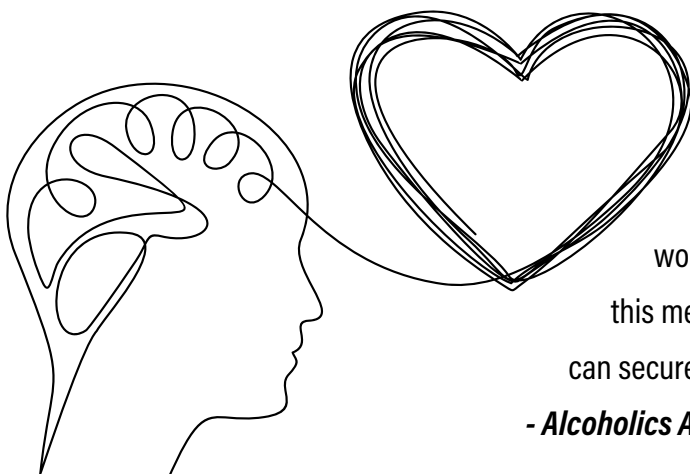
Contributed by Bridget F.

**“Unconditional
love will have
the final word in
reality.”**

- Martin Luther King

**“Forgiveness
entered my life
through my heart,
not my head.”**

- Grapevine Daily Quote August 25



Carry This Message

Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. ***This is our twelfth suggestion:*** Carry this message to other alcoholics! You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail.

- Alcoholics Anonymous, (Working With Others) p. 89

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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Visit our website and hear inspiring stories from AA members!

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

PLEASE SHARE 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 January 2024.

Send submissions to:
SandhillsNews@gmail.com

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We meet at 9am the first
Saturday of each month at
504 Wilder Ave, Aberdeen., NC

All AA'ers Welcome!

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moorecountyyaa@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***

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