

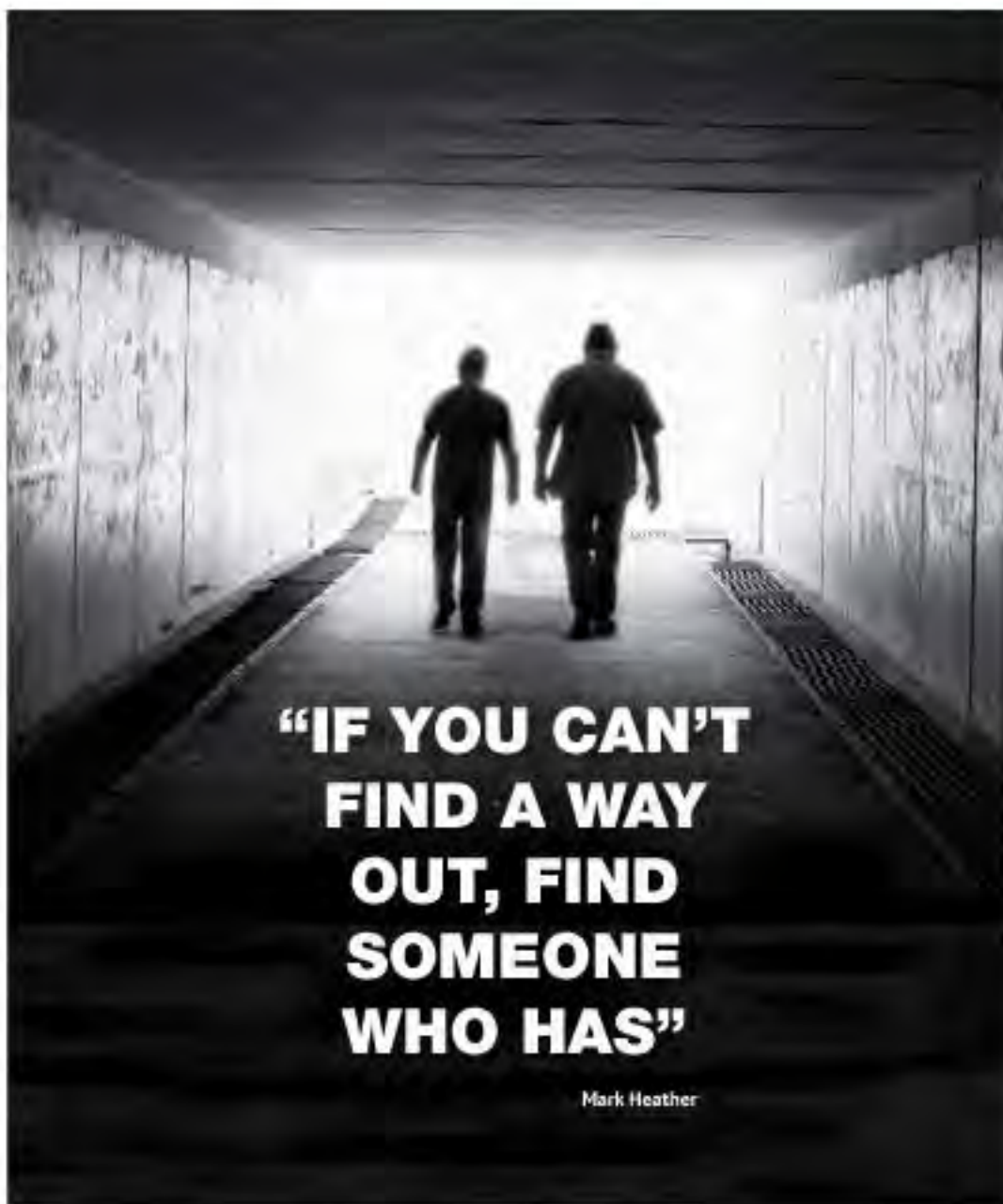


# Newsletter

Vol.2 No.1, Jan. 2018

SANDHILLS INTERGROUP

The SPONSOR Issue



**“IF YOU CAN'T  
FIND A WAY  
OUT, FIND  
SOMEONE  
WHO HAS”**

Mark Heather

IT'S OK TO BE OK – MY LIFE AND RECOVERY  
PHRASES – SAVED FROM WHO I THOUGHT I WAS  
THE SERENITY PRAYER – REMEMBERING JAMIE C.

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### Newsletter Contributors

Brent G.  
David B.  
Joe R.  
Michele B.  
Ruth K.  
and Remembering Jamie C.

Editor's note: All submissions are printed as submitted.

# "IT'S OK TO BE OK"

Most of us hear the echoes of our problems as we are entering the doors of AA. The people in our lives know by our attitudes and actions that something is remiss. However, most families, friends or employers have little insight into the root cause of the chaos. Alcoholism is often viewed as a sign of weak character or moral degeneration.

I spent some years working with adolescents needing help from addiction. I have always believed that alcoholism is a disease which manifests itself during the teen years for a large percentage of the AA membership. Here is a prime observation of this melding of alcoholic behavior and those words of bewilderment that follow us through the door.

Virtually all the kids who came for help arrived with head held down and pent up anger. Most were overwhelmed by negative feedback from parents, educators and probation officers. The result of years of criticism and ensuing guilt were obvious. The kids themselves really didn't believe that they were OK.

One day I decided to try and break through that maze of guilt and shame. I started putting both of my hands on the shoulders of a kid. I would then tell him, "I want you to look into my eyes. Believe my next sentence if you believe no other. It is OK for you to be OK."

My hope was to instill an element not commonly present when hitting ground zero in our alcoholism. That element is HOPE.

I have long believed that I am simply, at times, an adolescent in an older body. I got sober at age 33. My family called to question the

mentor who was helping me. The family was bewildered to the point of asking, "Why is he behaving this way? He is 33!" My mentor simply answered, "Chronologically he is 33. Mentally and spiritually he is 13!"

There had to be a remedy to the spiral of madness. The second step refers to a restoration of sanity. The implied concept is that a restoration is needed. How then, does this change from despair to hope take place?



Perhaps a very important concept is the belief in a Higher Power. Coming to Believe is a recognition that being a God unto oneself has not netted good results. Secondly, comes a recognition that we were the best people we could be when actively suffering with the illness. The problem is that sometimes that just wasn't very good.

Sponsorship is crucial to move from demoralization to hope. Good friend Fred M. often quotes his first sponsor who said, "We must abandon all hope of rebuilding our past." That quote really speaks to the importance of working in the present one-day-at-a-time to secure a better future. There is a silent yet powerful affirmation of hope when we attend a meeting. The strongest statement for hope is

exemplified by recognizing the many members who now have useful and productive lives.

– Brent G.



## My Life and Recovery

My name is Joe and I'm a recovering alcoholic. I had my last drink of alcohol on Friday October 27, 2006. I had a spiritual experience that I hope never to forget about because if I do I will be doomed to repeat the past and I could very well die from this disease called alcoholism. I believe I was born an alcoholic from day one. Alcoholism runs on both sides of my family. I believe this all started after I saw my uncle get shot in front of me by my grandfather. My grandfather was intoxicated at the time he shot my uncle. After this happened I vowed never to be like that but that never came true. I began to drink socially by 21 years old and after my grandmother passed away I drank a bit more. Then my uncle who was shot by my grandfather passed away and he was like a father figure to me and I lost my ability to control my drinking or to cope with the death of a loved one. I also was suffering from depression and the only thing that could relieve that was to drink. My drinking career ended when I drank myself to death one night. I could not stop drinking to save my life and it nearly killed me. I was unconscious for 8 hours or more. I was rushed to the hospital and was flatlining. The emergency staff broke two ammonia capsules and I was still unresponsive. Then someone did a sternum rub and I was barely responsive to that. In the middle of all this somewhere I died and went immediately to Heaven before the judgment seat of God and I was sent straight to hell. It was the most horrific experience I ever had and I will never forget those screams and the enormous heat that I felt while falling in an everlasting hell. I then came to in the emergency room in the ICU section hooked up to everything you could imagine. I vowed to never take another drink as long as I lived and that I would do whatever God would have me to do. Today I have over 10 years sobriety. I am thankful for every drop of alcohol that it took in order for me to see that I have a serious disease and that it wants to kill me. So then if I take this disease serious then I will take the solution serious and will do whatever it takes to stay sober. All that an alcoholic needs to do is be willing to do the 12 steps and learn to trust God, clean house, help others and trust the process. **This is my story, my name is Joe and I am an alcoholic.**

– Joe R.



## Phrases

My name is Michele and I am 38 days sober today. I was released from detox on Nov. 6th and was at my first meeting evening. My story is rather long, so I will not go into that at this time. Instead I would like to share some wise phrases that I've heard in meetings that keep me going to at least one meeting everyday. I refer to them as my daily inspirations. As time goes by I hope to hear many more.

1. **Keep the plug in the jug**
2. **If you don't call people when you don't need them, then you probably won't when you do**
3. **It's humble to stand but more humble to kneel**
4. **Pride can be a liability**
5. **AA meetings are like emergency rooms**
6. **We don't graduate, we are practioners**
7. **Being an alcoholic is like being on a bridge, don't get stuck on it**
8. **PMS=pre medallion syndrome**
9. **You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink or you can stand him in the creek and wait till he gets thirsty**
10. **Isolation is the dark room where we develop our negatives**
11. **You should never use the word "only" when saying how long you've been sober because every day is a new day and we're more important than ONLY**
12. **The more open you are the more others will be open for you**
13. **This is not a microwave program, you can't just pop your addiction in and out**
14. **Being an alcoholic and continuing to drink is suicide on an instalment plan**

There was no special order to the way I listed the list, I do not like any one better than the other. I adhere to them all with much gratitude. I do on the other hand wish my list will continue to get longer and longer.

– Michele B.



# Saved From Who I Thought I Was

Way down South there resides a judge. The Honorable Theodore Ignatz. He resided in a sleepy, yet prosperous town of Aberdeen North Carolina. "Iggy" (as he was known around town) was always regarded by the townsfolk as fair minded when it came to meting out justice. There was however a peculiarness about him though. Something he kept publicly well hidden.

During his work day, Iggy would toil over cases, and render verdicts. In the evening, Iggy would chat with fellow barristers at the local club over drinks. He often was seen at parades, community and church functions.

Iggy began feeling uncomfortable at times and began to leave functions early. Comfort came when he was back at home for an early cocktail. Iggy's friends would call his home wondering why he wasn't at the club at cocktail hour.

Iggy started keeping a small silver flask filled with gin under his robe when he was working. This was only to help ease his nerves as he toiled through the day.

There were whispers among the court clerks and secretaries about Iggy's sudden change in behavior. Iggy would go through the day jittery, unable to make eye contact and leave work as soon as he could.

Iggy could not wait to get home where he could drink alone. Deeper into despair Iggy went. Iggy's friends would call on him but, fearful and with increasing paranoia, he would not answer the phone. The shades of his home never went up in the morning any more. Mornings came and Iggy would be unable to get out of bed unless he had a drink.

Iggy started hearing and seeing things that simply were not there. Iggy did not go to work anymore, he had to keep his drinking

a secret. Worst of all, Iggy needed alcohol more than life itself.

Iggy lived this way day after day. When the gin ran out, he started drinking vanilla, Listerine, and when there was no more, rubbing alcohol.

One night, alone in his despair, he decided to end this crazy madness. There was no other way out. Iggy took out his pocket knife. It was then as he held the blade close to his leg that he remembered Ed, who he had graduated law school with. **Not knowing why, Iggy called Ed.**



Within the hour, Ed was at Iggy's door. Iggy told Ed of his inability to stop drinking, guilt and shame over who he had become. Ed listened and nodded compassionately. Ed told Iggy of his own story of how he couldn't on his own stop drinking. How he was tormented and driven by fear and despair. How every day was sheer torment and he had to drink around the clock to live.

Ed told Iggy of the group of men in town who meet often and have found a different way of life, an answer to their drinking problems.

Humiliated and ashamed, yet having no other answer and desperate, Iggy blindly trusted Ed and went to the meeting.

It was that night that Iggy found among the men that they shared a common problem and how day by day they were able to find solutions for living through something greater than one's own self.

Iggy found that night a certain peace and understanding that carries both he and Ed day by day.

There is a solution, AA.

— Ruth K.



## 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**, references the serenity prayer in her song, **Feel So Different**. • Well-known rapper, **50 Cent** raps the first two lines of the serenity prayer in his song, **Gotta Make It To Heaven**. • The soundtrack of the **Soul Food** movie addresses the serenity prayer. • Famous 60’s writer, **Kurt Vonnegut**, mentions the serenity prayer in his 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)

— Contributed by David B.

SOURCE: <http://www.thevoiceforlove.com/serenity-prayer.html>

## Remembering Jamie C.

*Jamie C. passed away in September. This article was written by her in 2015 and we reprint it here in remembrance:*

### KEEP COMING BACK

I have enough white chips to tile the entire Aberdeen building from the floor to the ceiling. No, it does not feel good to admit this defeat to myself or for that matter to anyone.

When it comes right down to it, I was not ready nor honest enough to be done. I had no problem telling you or anyone else the truth. Being honest with myself, that's a different story, I remained in my liar's booth for over 27 years trying to break free from these horrid chains.

After all those years my best friends left me empty, but full of broken heart and devastating remains. They told me to keep coming back, and it was harder & harder each time.

It all seemed relentless, I was tired of fighting, I really just wanted to die. I had six years sober but I relapsed in Sept. 2013. I remember vivid pieces of my last drunk, ambulance sirens, E.M.T's stripping me naked, and on my hallway floor there I was left lying. When they finally got my heart resuscitated, I opened my eyes to see my fourteen-year-old lil girl crying.

After some time in the hospital it was time to be released. No worries though, it only took me dying to realize alcoholism is actually a disease. So, I did what I knew I needed to do ... once again.

Humiliated and defeated, I returned to the rooms I grew up in. It was a Sunday morning, and that meeting was packed. None the less I sucked it up and came back. There I sat on a Sunday morning sober, shattered and broken, but willing to start over.

There they were ... those 12 steps still hanging on the wall. After reading them again, I questioned if I had ever paid attention at all. So, I got a sponsor and went through three or four. I concentrated on the meetings and not the clock instead of running out the door.

The Big Book & 12 x 12, sponsor and meetings became a routine. Now I run to all of them and with my higher power, I feel serene. I listen to the newbies and the old timers, like a sponge trying to take it all in.

Every morning I pray to my higher power for the courage to keep coming back again. No it is not easy putting the broken puzzle pieces back together, but I know without the program of alcoholics anonymous I don't have a chance of staying sober ever. Meetings are my lifeline. Without them I wouldn't know what to do.

So, to every single alcoholic who enters the room, from the very depth of my heart, I simply just want to say THANK YOU.



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**“Cling to the thought that, in God’s hands, the dark past is the greatest possession you have – the key to life and happiness for others. With it you can avert misery and death for them.” AA, 2001, p. 124**

# 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.

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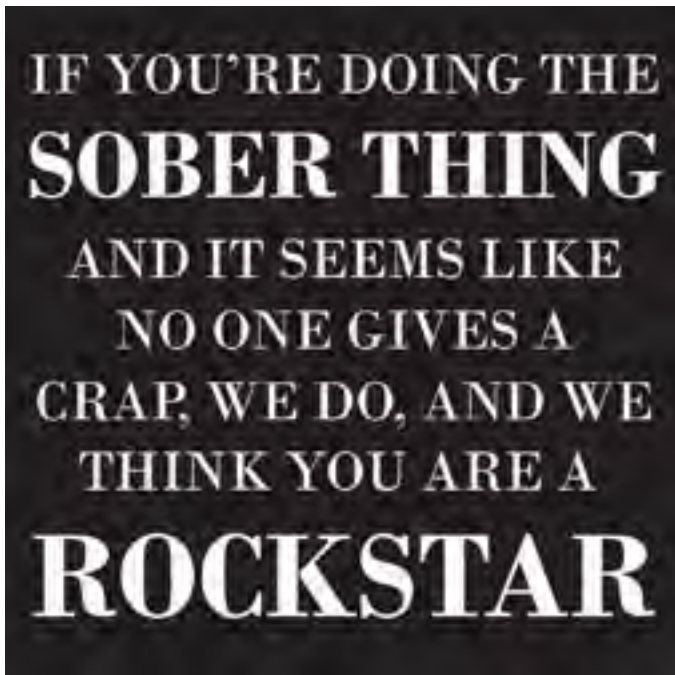
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CP/CPI	Dan P.
CFC	<b>Open Seat</b>
Treatment	Kenny D.
Grapevine	Rebecca R.
Webmaster	<b>Open Seat</b>

*District 52 Officers meet the first Sunday every other month. Locations vary. For more information visit [www.moorecountyaa.org/district52](http://www.moorecountyaa.org/district52)*

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*\*Newly elected officers.*

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