



FRIENDS of BILL W.

District #30

www.aadistrict30va.org

Hotline: (540) 752-2228 Español (540) 656-2882

Vol. 6, Issue 4

Statement of Purpose: "Friends of Bill W." is the newsletter for A.A. District #30 in Virginia. It provides a voice that will cultivate the spirit of our district's common welfare and A.A. unity.

In The Spirit of Service

Dear Readers, thanks for all the great newsletter input and suggestions! Please keep it coming! Submissions, anniversaries, event notifications, and ideas can be sent to: newsletter@aadistrict30va.org. XXX.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Hot-Line Volunteers Needed: Call (540) 752-2228, email hotline@aadistrict30va.org, or reach out to XXX.

Jail Meetings: If interested in joining a Rappahannock Regl Jail meeting, e-mail corrections@aadistrict30va.org, or contact XXX or XXX. Applications are on the District 30 website.

Sunshine Lady House and Boxwood Facility meetings: Sunshine Tue/Thurs 7 pm; Boxwood Wed 8 pm. Contact XXX or email treatment@aadistrict30va.org.

DISTRICT 30 CORNER

Old business – District 30 website committee passed the following resolution in April: "District 30 will adopt the website guidelines as stated in Section 20 of the VAC Service Manual until further notice." Updated District 30 website guidelines will be published in the District 30 Service Manual at a later date. The entire service manual is currently being reviewed and rewritten, with a completion date goal of December 2020. Continue to check back here for updates on this project in the coming months.

DCM Report – Summer meeting was held in Norton, VA, July 12/13, to set the agenda for the Fall Assembly. Fall Assembly is the weekend of Oct 18/19, at the Holiday Inn Conference Center, VA Beach.

*Work shop topics for the Fall Assembly will be:

1. New GSR: Duties and responsibilities
2. DCM only sharing
3. Attraction through Action
4. Healthy Home Group: How to
5. Archives: How to
6. VAC and Today's Technology

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fresh Start Group (noon every day at Stafford Am. Legion)

– First Sunday of each month is a potluck lunch 'eating meeting' with a speaker.

Over the Hump Group (Wed 7 pm at Peace United Methodist Church) – Third Wednesday each month is a potluck 'eating meeting.'

EVENTS

Halloween Dance Planning Committee – Sep 4th, 6 pm, just prior to Over the Hump meeting, Peace United Methodist Church, 801 Maple Grove Dr, Fredericksburg. Contact XXX with questions.

District 30 Twelfth Step Call Workshop – Sep 7th, 2-6 pm, American Legion Post 55, 461 Woodford St, Fredericksburg. We will have a panel of experience, strength, and hope; Food and drinks; good old fashioned "Ask it basket"; bring your questions and a dish to share if you'd like.

2019 VAC Fall Assembly – Oct 18th – 20th, Holiday Inn / VA Beach – Norfolk Hotels and Conference Center, 5655 Greenwich Rd, Virginia Beach, VA 23462. Hotel reservation deadline 9/18/2019: call 757-499-4400.

ANNIVERSARIES

AUGUST

Names omitted for anonymity

SEPTEMBER

Names omitted for anonymity

OCTOBER

Names omitted for anonymity

EXPERIENCE STRENGTH AND HOPE

Inspirational stories from District 30 and greater AA

Someone's Big Book

(Reprinted from May 2019 Grapevine)

This past summer I decided to go to an eating meeting held the last Wednesday of each month, about 25 miles from my

house. During the meeting I noticed a guy eyeballing me really hard every time I looked his way. After the meeting he came up to me and asked if I remembered him. I didn't at first. Then he said his name was Steve, and that we had worked together 30 years ago. "Oh yeah," I said, "I remember. You and the other guys at work used to make fun of me after I got my DUI because I had to go to those AA meetings!"

Steve chuckled, then he thanked me. "When my drinking got really bad," he said, "I knew where to go, because I remembered how your life got better." He told me he had been sober now for more than 20 years. I'm coming up on 30. I now know what the old-timers meant when they said, "You may be the only Big Book someone ever sees."
--XXX.

Broken and Made Whole

I am not sure when it began for me, but I know that I always felt different from other people. I could walk into a room full of strangers, have every name memorized and attached to the right faces, and make the people in that room believe that I loved them. Most of the time, I convinced myself that I did. However, there was a deep secret that laid all across the landscape of my innermost being. I feared everyone in the room. I did not feel as if I measured up. If I let my guard down for a moment, then I would need to find the next window to jump out. I can say that today because I have been sober in AA long enough now that I know I am not at all alone in that kind of life beginning.

I was born into the chaos of an alcoholic world. By the time I was ten years old, I had carried with me all the brokenness of children that grow up in that hellish darkness. In my very southern family in Atlanta, I never had the freedom to speak about the darkness. What I saw there seemed to be normal to me. I knew nothing else. My southern family was concerned about status and their place in society. My family was of the southern "gentry class." What happened in the family always stayed in the family. We were destined to be "tribal" rather than a home where truth, emotional safety, forgiveness, and grace lived. As a result, I was a little boy filled with secrets that I did not understand.

Making this all even more complicated, I was born legally blind, and had a learning disability, riddled with Attention Deficit Disorder before we had terms like that to explain it. At ten years old, I had the attention span of a flea, which made me feel like a failure at life. However, I could act, sing, play the guitar, tell really good stories, and had a precocious gift with words. I was an excellent competitive swimmer until my senior year in high school when addiction was becoming a problem.

I began drinking at thirteen years old at Boy Scout camp. We drank warm beer out of one of the older boys' footlocker. The very next night I smoked my first bowl of hash and listened to Johnny Cash on 8 Track tapes. I never looked back. Those two nights seemed to help settle the roaring in my mind and made me feel like I could take the mask off. It was like a magic combination of potions that helped me join the human race.

It was also a way for me to rebel against what I felt had been a childhood of sick secrecy to keep the generational image unblemished. In looking back, our family had no one fooled. Everyone that had been a part of our generation was just like us. I knew no difference. The part I reveled in was that I was underage, I was breaking the rules, and felt like I was defining a "big man self" to the adults in my life. I made no secret of what I was doing. They did not confront it because that would mean others outside the "tribe" would know things that would bring shame on the family name. I had no concern whatsoever who I was hurting.

In 1981, I began college and dropped my organic drugs pretty quickly in my first semester. I replaced them with girls, more guitars, bluegrass music, grunge jeans, Birkenstock sandals, and an obnoxious anti-establishment bravado. Oh yeah, there was also lots of Jack Daniels, Jim Beam, Wild Turkey, and George Dickel. I loved the "brown water" over beer, any day. In the beginning, I had to get drunk to drink beer. By the end, I would drink anything I had to steal. I had a great group of people around me. At the time, drinking did not feel like an issue to me. In retrospect, I know that my drinking was a problem for everyone around me, especially those who tried to love me. I was also a problem for anyone who tried to play music with me. I loved music more than anything in the world - except drinking.

I'll admit I look back on some of those days with a smile and a little sparkle in my eye. One of our number in college that lived in the music with us went on to become a world class, Grammy award winning singer and performer. I have wondered to this day if she remembers all the "hazy fun" we had together. I have since heard that she did learn of my recovery, and expressed deep relief for me and anyone who chooses to be around me today.

The years that followed would become desperately dark and hopelessly panic driven. In the end, I would get sick if I drank and become even sicker if I did not. I had no friends. I no longer owned a guitar. I hid behind a shelf of unopened graduate school textbooks and rarely spoke to any family in Atlanta.

My last drink was sometime in December 1988. On the evening of December 28 of that same year, I went on a cold night to a local hospital in an ambulance where I began the dark hell of alcohol withdrawal. I was also laboring through countless and painful health problems that made me want to die in my sleep. The problem was, I could do neither. My body would not die, and it would not sleep. This was hell.

A foul mouthed hippie Benedictine nun stood at the foot of my hospital bed. She spoke to me about the terrors of an alcoholic death, but also a deep and powerful love of Alcoholics Anonymous. She made it very clear that I was the only one that could make a choice to die of a probable esophageal hemorrhage-- or come into AA and toss my luck in with some new friends that "could at least call my family in Atlanta if I died." I swear that was her crass ultimatum! So when I came to AA, I never really thought I was going to live, and not die. She knew better in the deep, hollow chambers of a bottomless heart. She saw in me what I eventually found for myself, long before I could see it.

I have now been a member of AA for over 30 years without a drink or a drug. I have had good times and bad times. There have been times of great success and times of unspeakable failures. However, I have never picked up a

drink again. The greatest gift I have received has been a deep and abiding spiritual connection that has sustained me through so much. The center point of the spiritual connection lives in the empty spaces between me and whoever I am sharing with at any given time and place.

I was born in 1962 and very well could have died in 1988. However, I was gifted with a new life and endless "second chances" in the life of AA. I was given the opportunity to love and be loved by the most diverse, "motley crowd" of folks that a man could ever hope to be graced among. I have been given the gift of compassion for people I have not been asked to understand, but who have helped me understand and accept myself more than I would have without them.

I have been given life...

I have been given the gift of reaching into a choice to live, love, forgive, and begin a new day again...

I have been given One Day at a Time...

I have been given to so that I can give back....

I have been given the gift of brokenness so that I would know what wholeness is....

--XXX.