



FRIENDS of BILL W.

District #30

www.aadistrict30va.org

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

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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.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Hot-Line Volunteers Needed: Call (540) 752-2228, email hotline@aadistrict30va.org.

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

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

DISTRICT 30 CORNER

(District business, DCM reports, Literature)

The A.A. Home Group

2020 was a tough year, COVID took us all by surprise. We lost loved ones that we held dear, but we stuck together. We found a solution and stayed connected in zoom meetings. There have been several newcomers in our district that were able to get sober solely on zoom. That by itself is a miracle. I am grateful for the technology and the fellowship in the online meetings. The A.A. zoom meetings and the outdoor pop ups have been a saving grace. If you are looking for a meeting, please reach out to the hotline or the A.A. District #30 website. [name removed for website anonymity]

Greetings to all of Fredericksburg A.A.,

I am very excited to serve the district in any way that I can and look forward to working with my fellow officers and committee chairs. During these times, it can be hard to

shift gears and find service work and ways to carry the message. There is always something to be done at the district level of service. We have 16 committees and plenty to do. When I was first starting in service, I was encouraged to find something I was passionate about, and then just dive in. Eleven years later, I can tell you with absolute certainty that I am just getting started. I am so encouraged by all of you active in all levels of service. To all the groups, please send your GSR to the Spring Assembly to have your voice heard to all of A.A. Especially now, since the event is virtual, there are no travel expenses. I know so many people will welcome the day when we are able to meet again in person, but for now we will continue our service work in whatever way God puts at our feet.

In Service,

DCM [name removed for website anonymity]

DISTRICT 30 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please see the District 30 website for zoom meetings and any additional information.

EVENTS

District 24 Service Workshop Feb 27, 2021

Spring Assembly (All GSR's) March 19, March 21, 2021

ANNIVERSARIES

[anniversary list removed for website anonymity]

Pick up a newsletter at a meeting for the printed anniversary list for the next couple months!

FROM THE ENTERTAINMENT CHAIR

Happy New Year District 30! Please contact entertainment@district30va.org for any information or questions on events. Thank you for the opportunity to serve. [name removed for website anonymity]

ARCHIVES TODAY

Happy New Year and I am grateful to be a part of archives and I look forward to working on the archives committee. If you'd like to join the committee, please email me at archives.district30va@gmail.com. [name removed for website anonymity]

This will be just a short note to thank you all for allowing me to serve as Archives Coordinator for 2019-20. It was a pleasure getting to know more about A.A. history and about the history of some of our groups as info was gathered and forwarded to the VA Archives office in Waynesboro. Hopefully, we will see some of this published in the next volume of Virginia's A.A. history. Our new Archives Coordinator already has some wonderful ideas for documenting District 30 history as it happens. The Archives COVID Project is continuing and needs your contributions. This is an important part of our District 30 history which only YOU can provide. Please see suggestions for participation on the AA district 30 website. [name removed for website anonymity] "Archives AB"

EXPERIENCE STRENGTH AND HOPE

Inspirational stories from District 30

A New Era

God grant me the serenity, to accept the things I cannot change. These are the words that flowed through my head the minute I realized the COVID-19 Pandemic was going to change so much about everything I thought I knew. In the blink of an eye, we collectively experienced society come to a screeching halt. States began placing mandatory quarantine and social distancing to protect its citizens from a silent and invisible killer. However, for me, this virus isn't the biggest threat to my life. Alcohol is. At the beginning of the quarantine, I had to evaluate what this change looked like in my current program. Here I am in the first year of my recovery and we no longer have the ability to physically attend. It was so easy at the beginning of this pandemic to get lost inside my head. Loneliness was always a major contributor to my drinking. I did not love myself enough to even look in the mirror and face what was looking back at me. The thought of being alone with myself made my skin crawl. When I returned to the rooms of A.A. in May of last year, I knew that retreating and facing myself and what was going on inside me was the only way I could heal. I had to learn to be with myself, but I couldn't take alcohol with me. I couldn't use it anymore to numb the depth of the emotions and pain I have always felt. So when the quarantine rules were put into effect, I had already been living a daily routine that didn't involve many other people. Yet the drastic change of not going into work every day, not having the freedom to go wherever I wanted to go, especially A.A. meetings – I found myself facing a whole new level of isolation.

This led me to think more about being in early sobriety. I still consider myself to be in early sobriety, but at the very beginning, I had the rooms to go to. I had a connection with others and felt the energy and magic that is created when a group of alcoholics are together. I had a place to go where I knew I was safe, for at least an hour, and that I wouldn't take a drink. To think about another going through such a dark period of life and not having the opportunity I had is a frightening thought. So that leads me to where we are today, almost two months into the quarantine. Many meeting topics have looked at "to what lengths are we willing to go to stay sober". I can honestly say at this part of my journey I have lost the sense of desperation that forced me to any lengths to not take the first drink. For that, I am eternally grateful. At the same time, I realize that right now "going to any lengths" for me means making sure my fellow alcoholics are ok. The Zoom meetings provided a wonderful substitute for our face to face meetings, but they bring some challenges. This is especially true for those who do not consider themselves technologically savvy or don't even have access to the necessary equipment. When I realized that my home group did not have a meeting set up yet on Zoom, I felt led to make sure that happened. By taking ownership I've also found that the burden of responsibility has fallen on me to cohost and lead. If I'm 100% honest, cohosting and leading a group on Zoom every week brings me a great deal of anxiety. Between handling sound issues, topics to lead, managing participants, it's overwhelming. I do not even have a year of sobriety, what can I possibly provide in the way of leadership? However, in the past several weeks of leading, I've seen lots of new people in the meeting. I hear their gratitude for having the meeting available. That's when I realize that "going to any lengths" from my perspective is making sure someone else can get the medicine they need. Service to others, especially in this time of uncertainty, is the simple action that insures my sobriety. I will always remember the pain, suffering, and loss of hope I experienced until the end of my active alcoholism. If I can help one other person by shining a light into the darkness of alcoholism then that is my responsibility. *"I am responsible, when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there, and for that I am responsible."*

—Anonymous

How I Found Acceptance

"And acceptance is the answer to all my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing or situation – some fact of my life – unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment." (Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th Ed., page 417).

I heard from day one, "acceptance is the answer to all my problems" ... But, what is acceptance? Is not professing to the world, "I am an alcoholic!!" enough to accept my disease? Therefore, bringing me to my utopian world I prayed for, more realistically cried out for in sorrow and pain, when I was drinking. For everyone reading this, for me, that would be a no. I learned quickly in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) that I had only begun the process of accepting my surroundings that led me to drink.

Along with my self-proclamation of my disease, I needed to get a sponsor, work the steps, stay in the moment, and establish a conscious contact with my higher power, who I choose to call God. These are the suggestions AA taught me to fully understand and accept the challenges that make me a drunk. Challenges that still exist today (if I let them), such as relationship problems, financial insecurity, and the occasional, "but that is not fair, you never let me get my way" attitude. AA has given me the emotional intelligence to more adequately adapt and function in a healthy environment. AA has taught me "that we are all children of God and we each have a right to be here. When I complain about me or about you, I am complaining about God's handiwork." Moreover, by working with my sponsor and through prayer I have learned I do not have to like every situation, but I have to accept it as it stands. With all of that said, without AA I would not be the person I am today. I am exactly where I am suppose to be. For that I am grateful. Thanks for letting me share.

—Anonymous