



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. 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

(District business, DCM reports, Literature)

The AA Home Group

Note: There has been some debate in the rooms of Fredericksburg about belonging to multiple home groups and filling multiple service positions. Some guidance has been officially put out by the GSO in the form of the pamphlet, "The A.A. Group....where it all begins." On pages 15 and 16, it says:

"Traditionally, most AA members through the years have found it important to belong to one group they call their "home group." This is the group where they accept service responsibilities and try to sustain friendships.

With membership comes the right to vote on issues that might affect the group and might affect AA as a whole – a process that forms the very cornerstone of AA's service structure. As with all group-conscience matters, each AA member has one vote, and this is ideally voiced through the home group."

So, it is through the home group that we hold positions and vote. One home group and one vote. This does not mean that one cannot perform service work at multiple groups. But the key positions in any group should be held by home group members. Pages 18 and 19 offer further guidance on what positions within a group should be held by home group members, what the suggested qualifications should be, and what functions each office holder should perform.

Tradition 4 states, "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups and AA as a whole." So, each group is free to set whatever requirements for service positions they want. However, when members vote multiple times in multiple groups on matters affecting other groups (at the district level) or AA as a whole, that violates the Traditions. We should make every effort to hold to the traditions as best we can, because without the traditions, our whole structure may collapse. Without the groups, we would lose the "unity" part of AA and may jeopardize our individual sobriety.

DISTRICT 30 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Over the Hump Group (Wed 7 pm, Peace United Methodist Church) – 4th Wed is a potluck "eating meeting."

EVENTS

VAC Growth Workshop 2020 – Oct 24th (11 am to 4 pm), American Legion Post 55, 461 Woodford St., Fredericksburg, VA, 22401. Contact VACGrowthWorkshop2020@gmail.com for more information and service opportunities.

ANNIVERSARIES

FEBRUARY

Names omitted in web version for anonymity.

MARCH

Names omitted in web version for anonymity.

FROM THE ENTERTAINMENT CHAIR

_Happy New Year District 30! I would like to start by saying thank you to the Alcathon Committee for a great event. It is an honor to be able to serve District 30 as the

Entertainment Chair. With a full year under our belts, I must say, I have thoroughly enjoyed each and every task given. It is awesome to be able to observe how WE have fun in sobriety! In the previous years, District 30 has had multiple events, to include a Spring Dance, 4th of July Picnic, Halloween Dance and the Alcathon. This year we will be having "Not a glum lot follies" on June 6th -- If you are interested in a service position that will allow you to be part of the action, The District is currently looking for a Chair for the 4th of July event. Please contact me for more information about both events. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

—XXX

ARCHIVES TODAY

At AA we love to celebrate special occasions, whether birthdays, holidays or anniversaries. At times I think this may just be a holdover from when we used to drink. In those days any occasion (or no occasion at all) was a cause to "celebrate". Nowadays, though celebrations may be drug and alcohol free, we still enjoy taking time to congratulate each other on those special days. Apart from individual members who celebrate this month, we also have a group birthday –

On February 26th Early Birds celebrates its 21st anniversary here in downtown Fredericksburg. **Happy Birthday Early Birds !**

In honor of that occasion, and in keeping with what will hopefully become an Archives Today tradition, I'd like to share a little about the group's history. Early Birds began "officially" back in 1999. However, like many groups in AA, it had an unofficial start a few years earlier. XXX and XXX knew each other from another AA group, and were regularly meeting up in the early morning hours at XXX office. Agreeing that an early morning meeting might be good, they decided to find a place to meet that could accommodate more than just the two of them. St. George's offered an open door at that early hour, and so they migrated over to the second floor of the church. It is uncertain whether that was a formal arrangement. A short time later they began meeting "officially" at St. George's in Faulkner Hall. XXX and XXX were joined by XXX and XXX Within that first year, however, XXX moved away from the city because of her work, XXX retired and XXX no longer attended the meeting. The church requested that the Early Birds move downstairs to the kitchen side of Sydnor Hall on its lower level. It was during this time that XXX was frequently the only person in attendance. Sitting alone with her newspaper and Big Book, she faithfully kept the

doors open for anyone, especially any newcomer, who might be looking for an AA meeting.

Miss XXX was later joined by men from Serenity House, a local treatment center, and by XXX, XXX, and XXX. XXX and XXX continued to host the meetings when XXX was absent. XXX left the group permanently in 2013 to be closer to her family in Northern Virginia. Before leaving EB that last time she turned over her keys to XXX, charging him with keeping the doors open. Miss XXX passed away on July 4, 2019. She's remembered today as a special person in the group's history.

Over time, EB meetings grew in number from one day a week at the start, to three days by 2012 and to 6 days by 2014. Like any group, Early Birds had its share of growing pains along the way. In the beginning, when it was still a very small group meeting once weekly, there were too few members to elect officers or have group conscience meetings. There was no formal meeting structure. People gathered at round tables and addressed whatever problem or issue was at hand. Sometimes they focused time and energy on getting just one person sober. The first group conscience was not held until 2014 at which time EB members voted to adhere to the Traditions as best they could. In good faith, the group elected its first officers, most of whom disappeared, resigned or relapsed within the first year! The group also voted to expand meetings to a second site, the Promises Club, which seemed to hold great promise, but didn't quite work out as expected. EB finally returned full time to St. George's in late 2016 and has held 6 meetings a week there since then. EB has also developed a number of annual traditions since its founding. It holds breakfast meetings on Founders Day and on Thanksgiving. These are always open to families, friends and members of other groups. EB has supported the "Adopt a Rack" program at Thurman Brisbane Homeless Shelter since 2015. It has given or hosted a number of AA workshops and seminars, the most recent of which was a Traditions workshop held in January this year. Early Bird meetings are always open meetings and include both men and women. Attendance is typically between 30 and 55 and there is always a seat for one more.

In closing, I'd like to wish Early Birds many more successful years of carrying the AA message. I'd also like to thank those EB "long timers" whose help was invaluable in putting this history together. (You know who you are!) Any errors or omissions are mine. Your corrections and suggestions are always welcome!

Yours in service, Archive AB

PS: If your group's anniversary is coming up and you'd like to see its story in the newsletter, please let me know at the next District meeting through your GSR.

EXPERIENCE STRENGTH AND HOPE

Inspirational stories from District 30

Darkness

This morning my thoughts weigh heavy on me. Thoughts and flashes of ways in which I've fallen short. Feelings of shame and guilt that ever reminds me of my shortcomings past and present and failure. These thoughts and feelings weave together to form a whirlwind of chaos in my mind.

For me, going down this road of shame, guilt, and unworthiness is a recipe for a drink. It's these thoughts and feelings that find a way to convince me that taking a drink is in my best interest. You see, the darkness and emptiness that I feel when I begin to go down the path of self-pity and pain is enough to make me end it all. I can't see through the darkness. The haunting negative self-talk and whispers of defeat try to convince me that none of it is worth living. And then comes the drink. If I drink, alcohol lies to me and persuades me that the pain is too much to bear and that drinking will make it all go away. And it does. For the moment.

As each day passes and I make the conscious choice not to pick up and take a drink, it becomes clearer to me just how much alcohol wants me to die. The very feelings of shame, guilt and pain that I am trying to suffocate are actually brought on ten times worse after drinking. That became a vicious cycle, repeating itself over and over like a broken record. Every time I drink I play my role to the tee of being a willing participant to being one step closer to losing the most precious gift I have ever been given. And that is my life.

It is moments like this morning when I find myself creeping back into a place of misery that I now have the ability to recognize what is actually going on. There is a self-awareness that awakens when the bondage of alcohol is being released. For someone like me with well over two decades of drinking, there is a lot of wreckage to contend with after making the choice to surrender and stop drinking. Just not putting the drink in my body is only half the battle. The other half is trying to fit the pieces together of who I once was and who I am going to be. To not listen to the lies that try to overtake the garden which is within my brain. In early sobriety, it has been difficult to unexpectedly get hit with remnants of the trauma I bear. It can be overwhelming with emotion for me, but the most important part of that is doing my very best to face the

emotion, face the trauma, and come to terms with what that experience is trying to teach me. How I handle it and deal with what comes my way is what shapes the path for me now. I no longer subscribe to the lies I once believed, but it takes time and patience and work...work...work....

—Anonymous