



JULY/AUGUST 2016

## 30<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

### FRIENDS of **BILL W.**

[www.aadistrict30va.org](http://www.aadistrict30va.org)

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Vol. 4, 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 AA unity. How? It communicates District 30 business, provides a forum for individual stories of experience, strength, and hope from District 30 members, and provides other events and information relating to the pulse of A.A. District 30. Opinions or content in articles and letters are solely those of the contributor. The editorial team reserves the right to edit materials for length and content. Quotations from AA literature are copyrighted and reprinted with permission from its source.

#### **30<sup>th</sup> District Committee Member**

There is so much going on in our area this summer and fall! I very much hope you'll take advantage of the opportunities- you'll have chances to travel and discover fellowship and general service around the state and we have opportunities to learn from Virginia Area Reps (VAR) who will be right here in and nearby Fredericksburg. First up, of course is **the July 4th Picnic**. I want to thank each person and group that has taken action to lend a hand or contribute money. I think AA's understand independence better than many people. I'm grateful to live in the land of the free with the people who are happy, joyous, and free. Next, mark your calendar now for **Service Saturday**, August 13 at Salem Baptist Church 4044 Plank Road, Fredericksburg, VA 22407. This will include a **workshop on AA's Third Legacy** such as "The spirituality of AA elections" with past VAC Delegate Scott G. This is perfect timing, since our district leadership elections take place in September and October. Service Saturday will include experience, strength and hope on all kinds of service positions. It will help local AA's understand how voting and elections work in Virginia Area and help insure that our General Service Reps (GSR) are fully prepared to participate and to feel connected and engaged at assemblies when they represent our groups and recovering individuals. Please come learn more about how to get involved. Like the old timer said, "You can't fall off the middle." Right after our local Service Saturday, we have the opportunity to travel up to the Hyatt Regency Reston Town Center Reston, VA, **2016 Convention** on August 19-21. On September 24<sup>th</sup>, we will host the **VAC Corrections Workshop**. This will happen at Salem Baptist Church, 4044 Plank Road, Fredericksburg, VA 22407.

We're honored and excited to have folks from around the state come and share experience, strength and hope about carrying the message behind the walls! **Correction:** in my last newsletter report, I mentioned that the Fall Assembly October 14-16 was in Collinsville. Nope! It is in sunny Virginia Beach (!) at the Holiday Inn Virginia Beach – Norfolk Conference Center 5655 Greenwich

Rd, Va. Beach VA 23462. I'm delighted to see more and more of you involved in general service these days - the fellowship I crave is growing up around me. Thank you very much for allowing me to serve. Lisa B, DCM

#### **The Fellowship I Craved**

To all the fine folks in the Fredericksburg Area AA, my how I miss thee! Well it's been 7 months since the big move to Georgia and I can say I'm finally getting some roots put in the ground. I resisted for some time because while the good folks of Georgia, A.A. were nice enough they were not you! I felt a lot like a new comer, showing up late and leaving right after. I prayed every day and tried to do the right thing but something was missing. I began a fresh round of restless, irritable, and discontentment. For fun I spent some time wallowing around in emotionalism often getting a misshapen pleasure out of it! I started to work on my frothy emotional appeals but they seemed to fall on deaf ears.

One day it occurred to me that perhaps I was again running the show. I was able to detect this by observing that everything around me was turning into a sh\*t sandwich! How long had it been since I was sincerely willing to do God's will? What was missing? The fellowship I crave is what was missing. It was time to accept where I was and who I was and to ask He who presides over us all what He would have me do? I went to a meeting early, and then I stayed late. I got some phone numbers and dialed them. I asked around as to what are some good meetings to go to and was given suggestions. Then and this is key...I followed the suggestions. I'm finding the people that love to open the Big Book. The men and women who are excited about this chance we have been given. I have access to new comers and I am starting to open the Big Book with them. I believe I am starting to make some friends. I have also found my home group on Saturday mornings at 9:00 a.m. It's a men's group called The Greasy F\*\*\*\*rs Breakfast Club! The sobriety is good and I feel at home.

I guess the point of all this is that armed with these steps, the Fellowship of the Spirit, and a God of my understanding, the Fellowship I Crave is wherever I go! What a miracle! When moving from Fredericksburg I knew in my heart that nothing could replace you guys..... I of course was right about that! For me this can be summed up in the last paragraph of Bill's Story and it's what I'm finding more and more "Most of us feel we need look no further for Utopia. We have it with us right here and now. Each day my friend's simple talk in our kitchen multiplies itself in a widening circle of peace on earth and good will towards men." May God Bless and Keep You All  
Buddy, Who Recently Moved to Atlanta GA

## My Story – Willing To Go To Any Length

I was born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana. Parents divorced when I was young. Went to Catholic schools. Enjoyed volleyball, judo, and horseback riding. A lot more to the story of growing up but here to write about my journey into recovery. This is about being willing to go to any length one day at a time.



I became a police officer for 13 years and in that last year I had a moment when I looked up and asked for help. I got up in a drunken stupor and felt as if I was led and assisted to the phone

where I called the AA hot line for help. The next day, October 10, 1988 I attended my first meeting of Alcohol Anonymous. I cannot remember what was said, but I remember feeling that I was right where I belonged and saying to myself that I knew I was going to be okay. I continued to go to meetings, got a sponsor, met new people, attended AA functions, and step meetings.

At about 3 months I was stopped at a red light and realized that for the first time the craving for alcohol was not there. I felt this feeling of complete love wash over me and again I knew everything was going to be okay. That is still how I describe my higher power today. I continued going to meetings and was willing to go to any length. I soaked in everything that was said and started practicing the suggested steps when things would come up such as problems at work, with relationships and the near found fears I had come up after drinking them away for years. But I did it and began to grow.

The promises started coming true for me. I had found new friends. I also met and married my husband in the program. He was a Marine. We moved to his next duty station in Cherry Point, North Carolina. We both got new sponsors and attended meetings and made new friends. He went to the Middle-East on and off for 6 years and we had 2 beautiful children. Our next stop was San Angelo, Texas. There we did the same and became involved in the conventions. Great memories. Next stop was Fredericksburg, Virginia. Here my husband retired and we have chosen to live. Both children are grown and doing well.

Sounds like a fairy tale and it is if I think back to that night I asked for help. The night when I had felt an emptiness inside and had wished and hoped I would just not wake up. One second where I had asked for help. Sure there have been a lot of trying times and periods of growth in this program. But never like that moment. Each move I felt like a newcomer again doing all of the same things all over again to assure I would not get back to that moment of hopelessness again. The old timers would remind me that it was progress not perfection. Every day I wake up and ask for help and guidance for another day and at night I say thank you from the bottom of my soul (which I have been given back). Every single day that I get up and ask for help I get it!!

From enjoying the beauty of life, working on myself, surviving 4th stage cancer, problems with family, relationships, loss of loved ones and pets, loving myself as my higher power loves me, having patience, understanding, compassion, communicating in a healthy way, back to enjoying the beauty of life and most important to me...the restoration of my soul that had been taken away so many years ago by the obsession and inability to stop drinking. May I never forget, always remain teachable, and

always be willing to go to any length (working the 12 steps myself and with others) One day At A Time...with much love in my heart today and a will to live a life I had dreamed and am doing. I say THANK YOU, Patty L.

## No One Tried To Sell Me Anything

Early on in recovery, I was attending a regular Steps and Traditions meeting in my neighborhood. Being summer, one of the first readings I participated in was the 7th Tradition Chapter in the 12 and 12. At the time, I was putting all of my thought and energy into staying sober, so I felt like for me, studying the Traditions was a waste of my time. I was still trying to get a handle on the 12 steps. I didn't think the finer points of how AA functions as an organization would help me much. Then one of the attendees shared this: "At my first AA meeting I was completely confused. All of these strangers were coming up to me and saying 'hi', but no one was trying to sell me anything." The comment was funny, but as I got more sobriety time under my belt, I began to understand what a profound statement that is.

I remember how people welcomed me when I first came to AA. They were warm and went out of their way to say hello, but it wasn't that phony "great-to-see-you" I experienced at so many of my work-related functions. They made it clear that they couldn't cure me of alcoholism, but if I wanted to stay sober, they would be there to help me. I have a little over three years sober now, and I am so grateful for my fellow AA's. They have helped me with words of encouragement and are always ready with helpful advice. To me, that is the heart of what Alcoholics Anonymous is—helping each other to stay sober.

The 7th Tradition is a part of that because being self-supporting means we have to rely on each other in the AA Fellowship. If I were paying somebody for treatment, I'd be really mad right now because I am not cured! I know now that alcoholism cannot be cured, but that it can be arrested. I just have to arrest it one day at a time, just for today. Thank God I don't have to do it alone. We may have different stories, but we all have the same problem. Once we take that first drink we cannot stop. And when we drunk it distorts our perception of reality. No amount of money can fix us. Fighting this illness alone, I get drunk, but we stay sober. By working together, by being there for each other, by welcoming the newcomer with phone numbers and meeting lists, by doing service, we can stay sober together. And with the grace of our Higher Power, I have a life more fulfilling than I ever thought possible. That is worth more than anything in the world. The great thing about coming to AA meetings is that no one tried to sell me anything. Steve W.

## The Gifts of Sobriety

I came to Alcoholics Anonymous more than 38-1/2 years ago because I had become convinced that alcohol was going to kill me and I didn't want to die an alcoholic death. I was three days shy of my 26th birthday. I have not had a drink since then. By the time I got here I had been consuming alcohol for more than half my life. Since my first drunk at age 12 I had never done much of anything that didn't involve alcohol and I had never become much of anything as a result of alcohol. I felt like I had failed at life. I was filled with guilt, remorse and shame, and it had become hard for me to look anyone in the eyes anymore. "Fun" involved drinking myself into a stupor as often as I could. Having

like-minded companionship was not a concern -- I was content to drink by myself.

I didn't know what to expect from Alcoholics Anonymous and had no idea I would be given the many gifts of sobriety that I have received -- I just hoped that AA would save me from dying. I had lived a miserable, lonely existence for years, and was prepared to continue doing so as long as I did not have to drink alcohol anymore. Quickly, I discovered that "we aren't a glum lot." The AA program taught me, and continues to teach me one day at a time, how to lead a productive, meaningful and reasonably happy life without alcohol. This is a gift of sobriety. I still have problems like all human beings, but with the help of AA I don't find it necessary to drink over them.

Here, I learned how to give a day's work for a day's pay. I learned about being a worker among workers, a friend among friends, a man among men. I learned about giving -- about being of service to others. And, I learned about the benefits of honesty and taking responsibility for my actions. These are gifts of sobriety, too. I found myself in our fellowship. Sobriety allowed me to figure out my likes and dislikes and how to enjoy the life I was given. I learned to be comfortable in my own skin, at least most of the time. That is another gift.

Today it's easy for me to make eye contact with others, and in a larger sense to hold my head up and look life in the face one day at a time. The ability to do this is priceless, and it is a direct result of the program. Feeling good about myself; living a good life without alcohol; and having people in my life who honestly care about me are just some of the intangible and priceless gifts I've been given, thanks to AA, and they are the things that have real meaning in my life -- not the car I drive, the labels in my clothing, the neighborhood I live in or the job I held (I am now retired).

In AA I recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body; however, I was not cured of alcoholism and after all these years without alcohol, I still need AA in my life. Meetings, the 12 steps, the principles of the program, my fellow AA's and a higher power I call God all play an important role in helping me stay sober one day at a time; they are key to my well-being, and my own program for daily living would be incomplete if I were to omit any of them. Together, they help keep me "on the beam" so that I can continue to receive, and benefit from, the gifts of sobriety. Robbie K.

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You know you've been in AA a few 24 hrs. when...  
You get up from the kitchen table and stack your chairs. *Written By  
Kirstin and Gang*

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### The Newcomer

My last drunk was a black-out with a few flashes of the night before. I woke up with the usual self-loathing and panic. When I tried to get up, I realized I had fallen while walking home from the bar and sprained my hand. This is serious, as it would make my work difficult. My drinking had progressed to the point that I

was drinking every day, without my permission. Vodka! Lots of it! I was bankrupt. I decided I needed to get sober and went to a meeting that night. I went inside full of fear and self-pity. The people had smiles on their faces and I immediately felt a sense of relief. People came up to me and offered me coffee and support. They accepted me right where I was and I was a mess. I didn't have to ask for phone numbers, they offered them to me. I met my sponsor at my third meeting. She flew into action, picking me up and taking me to meetings once or twice daily. She took me grocery shopping, and to counseling because I couldn't do it without a drink.

As weeks progressed she took me walking in the woods and other places so that I might get outside of myself. She introduced me to others in the program that had quality sobriety so that I don't build a dependence on her alone but built a foundation on the fellowship. Her sobriety is based on spirituality, a daily reprieve and she is passing it on to me. If I can't get this part of the program then I would have run on self-will run riot, and surely drink again. Although I am less than thirty days in, my life is already a thousand times better. I am finding a new way of thinking and a new way of life. I pray someone will identify with my feelings and reach out for help. There is someone in A.A. that will grab you by the hand and save your life by sharing his or her experience, strength and hope. Godspeed, J.J.

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### **Dear Readers,**

Thanks for sharing your experience, strength, and hope regarding the May/June newsletter topic from *Ms. Betrayed and Violated*. She wrote, "My husband accidentally found my recovery journals and read them. He is verbally attacking me concerning what he read in my journals and threatening to divorce me..."

Many of our readers said they had experienced similar situations in their relationships involving their journals, written step work, and private telephone recovery conversations. Some could not work pass the violation of trust, which others were glad that it happened because it cleared the air. One of our members said they would have never known the hurtful things they were doing had they not found the journal.

Another member accidentally overheard his spouse talking about him and his behavior, he could have walked away, but he wanted to hear what she was saying behind his back. He was glad that he eavesdropped on her conversation, because to his surprise after she talked about his misdeeds and what part she had play in it. To his shock, he heard her ask someone on the other end what she could do to support him when he's having such a hard time with his recovery. Wow, he realized that she did love him and she was getting the help she needed from her 12 Step Recovery Program too.

*Sincerely yours, Miss Gabby*

### **Dear Miss Gabby,**

We deeply love each other, but we are just like two porcupines every time we get close, we hurt each other. It doesn't matter rather we are saying good morning, paying the bills together, out to dinner at our favorite restaurant, or at an A.A. Meeting. In fact, we had to start attending separate meetings because we ended up sharing at each other in meetings. If either of our mouths are moving, we are probably fighting and saying hurtful things to each other. We tried couple's relationship therapy, which ended

in a screaming and yelling match. In fact, the argument got so heated my wife leaped across the table ripping my shirt right off my back. We tried a trail separation and realize that we can't live without each other. So we got back together after one long awfully painful week apart. We've been back together for barely three months this time and we are both making each other miserable. *Signed, Mr. and Mrs. Porcupines*

Miss Gabby would love to hear your experience, strength, and hope for our September/October newsletter regarding the topic from **Mr. and Mrs. Porcupines** at VAC District 30, P.O. Box 3202, Fredericksburg, VA 22402, or email [friendofbillw82@gmail.com](mailto:friendofbillw82@gmail.com)

**Submitting Articles: Length and Format**

The Friends of Bill W. Newsletter will publish work of different lengths, from snappy one-liners and one-paragraph anecdotes to full-column articles (word count 200-400 max). Text can be handwritten or sent by e-mail. Emailed text should be submitted as an attached files, saved in "Microsoft Word," or "Rich text". Handwritten text should be written clearly on one side of the paper. Include your phone Number please. Articles are reviewed and selected by the editorial team. Dark pen lined drawings, crossword puzzles, etc., are also welcomed.

**Birthdays and Announcements**

**June**

- Buzz 34 yrs
- Craig S. 41 yrs.
- Margret D. 28 yrs.
- Jim S. 13 yrs.
- Ponytail Rick 26 yrs.
- NY Mike 32 yrs.
- Russell C. 1 yr.
- Brent the Man 8 yrs.
- Philip D. 10 yrs.

**July**

- Robert M. 8 yrs.
- 24<sup>th</sup> Tish G. 16 yrs. 12x12 Stafford
- Lawson 13 yrs.
- 18<sup>th</sup> Janet 18 yrs. Sober&Happy
- Philip D. 10 yrs.

**August**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Marie H. 18 yrs. Women Sunporch
- 7<sup>th</sup> Margret P. 16 yrs. 10:30 VFW

**Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> District Meeting**, 1201 Caroline Street, Rappahannock Library, Theater Wing at 7:00 p.m.

**July 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Virginia State Conference of Young People in AA 20<sup>th</sup> Celebration**, in Charlottesville, VA; call (434) 977-7700 for details or email [vscypaa2016@gmail.com](mailto:vscypaa2016@gmail.com).

**July 4<sup>th</sup> Local Picnic** at Lorelei Park off Levells Road, bring a dish/dessert to share. First burger off the grill at 11:00 a.m.

**July 16<sup>th</sup> Summer Bunch & Delegate Share** at Immanuel Church On The Hill, 3606 Seminary Road, Alexandria, VA Literature, raffles, treasure packets, fellowship, and fun.

**July 26<sup>th</sup> Olive Branch Speaker from the Jackwalker Group of Richmond and Potluck** from 7:00 – 8:45 pm at St Georges Episcopal Church, 15446 Warwick Blvd, Newport News, VA. Bring a dish, drinks will be provided.

**July 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> 2016 Summer Meeting** all are welcomed. Sponsored by District 17 South Piedmont, Quality Inn/Dutch Inn, 2360 Virginia Avenue, Collinsville, VA (276)647-3721.

**August 6<sup>th</sup> Workshop – Professionals of our Community Unite** 12:00 - 3:30 pm at Trinity United Methodist Church, 110 W Main Street, Wise VA 24293. Lunch will be catered.

**August 13<sup>th</sup> Service Saturday** sponsored by our district at Salem Baptist Church 4044 Plank Road, Fredericksburg, VA.

**August 19<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> 66<sup>th</sup> Virginia Area Convention** at 1800 Presidents Street, Reston VA. \$30 pre-registration fee, \$102.00 Room rate, call 1-888-421-1442 or email [vac2016convention@gmail.com](mailto:vac2016convention@gmail.com).

**Hot-Line Subcommittee Volunteers Needed:** If you want to keep drinking that's your business; but if you want to stop drinking that's our business, call (540) 752-2228.

