



MARCH/APRIL 2017

DISTRICT #30 NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS of **BILL W.**

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Vol. 4, Issue 8

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. How? It communicates District 30 business; provides a forum for individual stories of experience, strength, and hope from District 30 members; 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 A.A. literature are copyrighted and reprinted with permission from its source.

District Committee Member Report

Fredericksburg is hosting the Spring Assembly April 7-9, 2017 at the Hospitality House located at 2801 Plank Road. Committee has been formed for this and is meeting on February 26, 2017 at 1:00 pm at the Salem Church Library. Also, I am coordinating having our state delegate Elliot come in either June or July for Delegate sharing. Looking at possible dates of June 24th or July 15th. --Jim C.

Leo B. Farewell

Leopold F. Battaglia, known to us as Leo B. passed away Friday, January 13, 2017 at the age of 85. Leo B. was the previous Editor of the District 30 Newsletter then called "30th District News Plus". In November 2015, when Leo had 6 years sober he told us farewell in his last newsletter as Editor. Leo also told us how he had become the Editor and why he qualified to be our newsletter editor. Leo said that out of the blue three years earlier, he had been asked by Jack K., then the 30th District director, if he would write a newsletter for our district. For Leo this was a welcomed request because he liked writing and thought it could be his contribution of service to our A.A. Fellowship. Jack had asked Leo in late January or early February of 2013, therefore Leo edited 18 issues of the newsletter in his 3 year commitment as Editor.

Leo felt that he was an excellent writer and would be well suited to edit our district newsletter. Why? Because he had

been appointed Comments Editor of the Fordham Law School Law Review. Leo spoke often of his multi-page article written in 1957 advocating and supporting the "Justice Holmes Decision", that local governments should be allowed to add fluorine to their water supply. Leo's article was circulated among many other law school law reviews. Leo confirmed that he was an excellent writer because his "fluorine water supply" article landed him complimentary letter from an Honorable Judge in New Jersey and a scholarship to Law School.

Leo was highly intelligent with quite a personality and odd funny sense of humor. Leo could tell a joke after the 12:00 noon Fire House Meeting and about 2:00 am you would finally get the meaning of his joke and wake up laughing. Leo explained to us how the Newsletter articles that he published were written by people who were insane and were restored back to their sanity as a result of a spiritual awakening brought about by working the 12 Steps of AA.

We loved and greatly appreciated Leo's newsletters and their interesting, helpful stories that gave us hope that our battered lives could be made better. Leo we greatly appreciate your time and efforts that you put into producing our Newsletter for three years. Leo, we say thank you for your hard work, love, care, and dedication to helping your fellow alcoholics to find and maintain sobriety. Farewell from all of us in District #30.

--ILS, Antoinette B., Editor

My Responsibility

Faith is more than our greatest gift; faith in action is sharing my sobriety with others, which is my greatest responsibility. In my own case, when I was driven to my knees by alcohol, I was made ready to ask for the gift of faith. And all was changed. Before my coming to believe, I had lived as an alien down in a dark abyss that many times seemed both hostile and cruel. In that dark hole, there existed no inner peace and security for me. Since I have come to A.A. I no longer experience my old pains, problems and former desolation. I now see the world as a place full of God's light and love. Despite all worldly appearances, to

the contrary, A.A. meetings cause me to believe that I do live in a world that makes sense. Sobriety has shown me that I am no longer hopeless, helpless, and alone.

Therefore, it is my responsibility to remember what the A.A. Service Manual teaches us. It tells us that A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who have not been given the truth may die. I pray every day that my Higher Power will continue to give me the willingness to fulfill this immense trust which God has placed on me to pass on the gift of life that was so freely given to me. For that I am responsible – John C.

My Story

Hi I'm Diane, I am an alcoholic and drug addict. I did not come to this realization and admission easily or quickly. I found out that I also have the disease of "Denial" –My story



discloses no immediate family history, my parents were social drinkers, at best; therefore, I couldn't possibly have this problem. I can tell you that I remember very clearly the first time I got

drunk, as a teenager, from raiding my parents bar with friends. The feeling of elation and powerfulness overwhelmed me and I thought I was invincible- could "leap tall buildings in a single bound"; well, at least a chain link fence in my front yard!! The crazy thing was, I did it. As short as I was, I cleared that thing without a scratch, forget the fact that I landed on my butt, unhurt and proud. But the process had begun.

I did not drink much until I was out of high school, out of my parent's house, and on my own. I was working, paying bills, and the most responsible person I knew! Partying was a weekly thing. During the 70's, you couldn't "party" without drugs being included. So that became my life. As I grew in my career, successfully "climbing the ladder" so to speak, my drinking grew as well. I was not in many people's company that did not drink. The drug use began to cycle. I was less involved with "those people" and more involved with "normal" drinkers. What I could not see was we lean towards those who drink like we do, so it seemed normal. I also have the disease of "more". So when my drug use would cycle around, I would start and not stop until I ended up in a hospital, my first being in 1985. Then approximately every 2-3 years. Each time I got out of the hospital, I would swear I was going to stop drugs and straighten out my life. However all the while I was neglecting the fact of my alcohol abuse.

Needless to say, I could admit my drug addiction, but not my alcoholism. I do believe that at some level, for me, I

knew they were one and the same. When I came into AA, I heard your stories and totally related "out" – as none of your experiences were the same as mine. I had that "terminal uniqueness" and was nothing like you. However, I kept coming back because by then I had lost that career; lost all confidence in myself; and lost the ability to see any way out. For almost 2 years, I continued to come to AA meetings, believing I was different, but having nowhere else to go. So if you are doubtful about having this disease, please keep coming back anyway, until you can get honest enough with yourself to decide. Once I was able to admit Step 1, my life began to change dramatically. I gave myself to this program; began to believe what you were telling me; and I even tried some of it!! I have not stopped coming ever since. That was 25 years ago. There is no "correct" way to get here. What is important is that you see a need to change your life, and have a desire to try something different. "WE" can take it from there. Diane K.

I Am Not Responsible

The A.A. Responsibility Pledge States: *I am responsible. When anyone anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that, I am responsible.*

A.A. does not tell us that we are responsible to:

1. Make medical or psychiatric diagnoses or prognoses, or offer advice.
2. Provide detox or nursing services, hospitalization, drugs, housing, jobs, money or other welfare services.
3. Accept any money for its services or contributions from outside sources.
4. Provide letters of reference to parole boards, lawyers, court officials, social agencies, employers, etc.
5. Engage in or support education, research, or professional treatment.

Our recovery is based on sharing our experience, strength and hope with each other, that we may solve our common problem; more importantly, our continued sobriety depends upon helping others to recover from alcoholism.

I totally can identify with the young girl's story "Freedom from Bondage" on page 549 in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Just like her family, my family in utter desperation performed an intervention to stop my drinking. I woke up days later and found myself in a restraint jacket, locked on the Psych Ward of our local hospital. At that very moment, I realized too that as a practicing alcoholic I had no rights. Society can do anything it chooses to do with me when I am drunk and I can't lift a finger to stop it; for I forfeit my rights through the simple expedient of becoming a menace to myself and the people around me.

With deep shame came the knowledge too that I had lived with no sense of social obligation nor had I known the meaning of moral responsibility to my fellow men. I took no responsibility for my drinking. I took no responsibility for my behavior. I took no responsibility to my wife nor our marriage. I took no responsibility in rearing our children. I took no responsibility in paying bills or cleaning up behind myself. I rationalized that I was too busy working my job to take on those responsibilities even though I was down in the basement of our home drinking until I passed out every night.

Today I am responsible. It's no more "rational lies" for me. I am taking responsibility as a husband and father. I am also taking on my responsibility as a member of A.A. to be one of the hands of A.A. carrying the message of sobriety to anyone who reaches out for help. --Anonymous

The Poem - Sobriety Man - by Rick P.

SOBRIETY MAN, what a strange trip.
It's been blowing my mind, since I picked up that chip.
See I thought reefer and wine, would make me a cool cat.
But brother helping brother man, that's where it's at.
First you gave me this schedule, said I should drop in.
At least ninety meetings man, just to begin.
So I heard all your stories, and maybe a few lies.
But I heard enough to realize, that you were quite wise.

Now I met a lot of you cats, I thought you all squares.
You made me wash ashtrays, and put away chairs.
I said I think you are tyrants, with these things I must do.
You said well thinking is your problem, now I'm making coffee too.

You all talked this jazz, about taking some stairs.
That eased your resentments, and your self-centered fears.
I said all of this jargon, is bumming my mind.
You told me to take it, one day at a time.

Then you gave me suggestions, and this Big Book to read.
You offered me hope that I could succeed.
You gave me directions, for the steps I must take.
To admit all my wrongs, and the amends I must make.

I said man that's a heavy order, it seems such a drag.
You said ask God for help, but man that's not my bag.
You said let go of the dogma, seek a God that you know.
So I sought and I found one, I call him Big Daddy O.
Now Big Daddy O guides me, through each passing day.
His protection and care, has shown me the way.

I moved out of the darkness, and into the light.
Found serenity, peace of mind, and that's out of sight.
I guess I've been brain washed, digging a new way to live.
Where I'm not always taking, and I've learned how to give.
Now I start every morning, with meditation and prayer.
And I'd just like to thank you, for all being there.

Newcomer's Corner

Here is my story of my life before recovery: Remember Editor, you said it could be from 1 to 400 words!

O = ZERO, HOW'S THAT FOR A STORY, ALL IN ONE WORD!

By Christopher V.

Twelve Big Lies

I'm Peggy, a sober alcoholic. If you are looking for content for your newsletter, I would like to offer this...

The 12 Big Lies

- I'll just have one.
- No one will know.
- I deserve it.
- I'll show them!
- It will make me feel better.
- I can handle it now.
- Everyone else is drinking so I can too.
- It will make the craving go away.
- Those meetings don't work for me.
- I'm thirsty.
- It's a sin to waste it.
- Oh, screw it all.

I listen to our precious retreads in meetings because I want to know what took them out so that I can watch for warning signs of my own sobriety becoming fragile. These are the 'pre-relapse' thoughts that I keep hearing repeatedly. I'm grateful to them for freely sharing with us the misery, fear, loss, and pain of their relapse. --Peggy

Forgiveness is my Responsibility

A few years ago, my first born son was killed while riding home on his motorcycle. When I got the call I rushed to the hospital as soon as possible. But Bobby died in the Emergency Room just minutes before I got there. A police officer told me that my son had been hit and killed by an uninsured drunk driver. I got no comfort hearing that a DWI involving a death carries a mandatory five year jail sentence. I felt so full of hate and rage. I didn't want this alcoholic in jail. I wanted him dead. If I could have gotten my hands on him I would have killed him with my own bare hands.

I am an alcoholic but I found myself hating sober alcoholics in the meetings. For a year I stopped going to meetings and calling my sponsor because they were alcoholics too. I didn't drink, but I was miserable. My sponsor called and told me that dry drunks usually become wet drunks. She said forgiveness is my responsibility and no one can Let Go and Let God but me. I wish I could say today that I have

forgiven that drunk driver, but I have not. What I have done is started praying for him daily. Hopefully, prayer will help my heart to learn that forgiveness is my responsibility. –Sue G.



You know you've been in AA a few 24 hrs. when...

You stop blaming your poor wife and start taking responsibility for your own bad behavior. *Written By Kirstin and Gang*

Readers' response to: "Meeting Makers Make It..." "She has finally given me an ultimatum-- either I stop going to those A.A. meetings or she is moving back in with her Mom." Some of our readers were given the same ultimatum by their spouses. Some of these alcoholics stopped going to meetings and ended up drunk; while others didn't stop going to meetings and their wives or husband left them. A few of our readers recommended their family members read Chapter 8 - To Wives" and Chapter 9 - The Family Afterward in the Big Book. Some other members had their mates go to Al-Anon. These readers shared that both partners getting treatment for the effects of alcoholism on each of their lives saved their marriages and helped them to heal together. Finally, one member wrote that she wanted to stay sober as well as stay married so she attended morning and lunchtime A.A. meetings while her husband was at work. Therefore, she was able to stay sober and work on her marriage. --*Sincerely, Miss Gabby*

Dear Miss Gabby,

I drank alcoholically for 20 years of my marriage. I recently celebrated my 1-year anniversary of sobriety. I had no idea that getting sober would destroy my marriage. I don't understand it, but my wife became twice as angry and miserable. She treated me as if I were still drinking and picked fights with me on a daily basis. I stood up to her for the first time in my life and I told her that she no longer could blame me for her outrageous behavior and unhappiness. I love my wife more than life itself. So, I was in total shock when she packed her things, stormed out the

house, and filed for a divorce. I'm wondering if anyone else has gone through this. --Signed: *Sober and Divorced*

Miss Gabby would love to hear your experience, strength, and hope; email friendofbillw82@gmail.com. Want to get the word out about your anniversary, an event, or articles, no problem. The article word count should be 1 to 400 words maximum. Send to the same e-mail address above.

Birthdays and Announcements

- Alicia G. 3/1 27 yrs. Step Sisters
- Rosalind 3/3 6 yrs. Chancellor
- Steve D. 3/3 3 yrs. Union Group
- Randolph P. 3/4 2 yrs. Wed Brooks Park
- Tyler A. 3/4 1 yr. Fri/Just For Today
- Jimmy K. 3/13 2 yrs. Brooks Park/Mon
- Eileen J. 3/17 18 yrs. Brooks Park
- Theresa S. 3/18 15 yrs. Brooks Park
- Diane K. 3/20 25 yrs. VFW 10:30am
- Brent 3/21 10 yrs. Misfits
- MoJo 3/24 6 yrs. Donut/Misfits
- Linda K. 3/25 18 mos. Brooks Park/Sat
- Lisa B. 3/29 13 yrs. KG Women Mtg
- Jim B. 4/5 10 yrs. Misfits
- Christa B. 4/7 4 yr. Misfits
- Mike F. 4/10 28 yrs. Misfits
- Jim M. 4/12 7 yrs. Misfits
- Valarie 4/19 7 yrs. Misfits

Every 3rd Wednesday, District #30 Meeting; 1201 Caroline Street, Rappahannock Library, Theater Wing at 7:00 p.m.

March 2017 10:30 a.m. Women's Sunporch Meeting; is moving to the Unitarian Church, 25 Chalice Circle.

May/June 2017 Annual Spring Fling; Is still being planned by our district Entertainment Subcommittee. Stay on the lookout for flyers with time and location details.

April 7th-14th 2017, Spring Assembly; Fredericksburg Hospitality House Hotel, 2801 Plank Road, Fredericksburg, VA 22401. Call (757) 499-4400.

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.

I'm A Friend Of Bill W.

Panel 1: I'm George, and I'm an Alcoholic. Bill W. said ...And for that I am responsible. So the topic for tonight is in Sobriety what am I responsible for?

Panel 2: George, when I first got here I did not want to be #*#!* responsible at home or in these @*%\$#! A.A. meetings.

Panel 3: Since I've been sober I've learned I'm responsible to help newcomers just as oldtimers helped me. Today I'm one of the hands of A.A.

Panel 4: That's right Roger, our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

Misfits Group