



30TH DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS of **BILL W.**

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Vol. 4, Issue 2

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 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.

Letter To The Editor

Dear Editor, I have been asked to give my views on the new Newsletter format. I found the Newsletter to be very informative about what is happening in our District. The article on John F. was a great tribute to a well-respected member of AA who is no longer with us. That having been said, I have some concerns about certain articles.

For instance, the Financial Report that has given answers to a lot of questions that some have but I don't feel that it is necessary to list the home groups that have donated as it may seem that some of the smaller groups that can't give may be looked at in a negative way. I don't know if we should be giving advice to people on the decisions that they are making in their life in the Miss Gabby section. I hope that the literature that is being recommended to read is AA conference approved. As far as the cartoon, I enjoy the humor, but if we are going to use names of those we know, that we get their permission.

As I said, I was asked my opinion on this Newsletter and I know some will agree and some will disagree with me. The most important thing that I feel that we all remember, whether we like or dislike this format, is all the time that is put into this Newsletter and the hard work that is done by trusted servants of this Fellowship with love and dedication to all of our well-being as was also done by people before them. I thank you for valuing my opinion on this Newsletter.

Respectively, Jerry S.

Letter From The Editor

Dear Jerry S., I asked you to write a Letter to Editor because I know that you tell it like it is and I deeply respect you and your honesty. You brought up many good points especially regarding the group donations that will be revisited. In the *Comic Strip* section our three real-life AA characters would have never given

me permission to use them as our Newsletter heroes. Maybe I could have talked always smiling, happy Roger and George who tracks you down when you miss Misfits and invites you until to come back (smile)... maybe I could have talked those two into it. But never could I have gotten humble, selfless Cowboy Tom to go along. Everybody who knows Tom, knows he does not like the spot light sort of stuff. Many people in our District are not as fortunate as I am to sit in AA meetings and hear Cowboy Tom's simple but powerful teachings 4 or 5 times a week. However, after your letter I have decided to change Cowboy Tom to Cowboy John and continue to use Cowboy Tom's teachings in the comic strip to help the sick and suffering alcoholics to find happy sobriety.

I wish you would take another look at *Miss Gabby*, our relationships' section. Maybe you will notice this article is not about giving advice. It is an AA meeting. One of our Fellowship brings up a topic on relationships, Miss Gabby starts off the discussion then opens the floor for others of our Fellowship to share their experience, strength, and hope on the topic. In response to recommendation of the Grapevine (GV) literature in our *"Sober Reading Guide" section*, I would like to take this opportunity to address AA conference approved literature according to October 2014 Service Material from the General Service Office entitled "Conference Approved Literature".

I did research and discovered according to General Service Office (GSO) if it is not STAMPED "*This is A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature*" then it is Not A.A. Conference Approved literature. Further GSO stated all AA literature is **Not Approved** literature. GSO didn't say it is **Disapproved** literature, but that our Fellowship has AA literature that is **Not Approved**. GSO defines literature to be AA literature if "*it is AA literature if it deals with the recovery program of Alcoholics Anonymous or with the information about the A.A. Fellowship. If the AA literature is not conference-approved, the GSO does not disapprove of such material*".

Local **Not Approved** AA literature such as meeting lists, flyers, announcements, newsletters, pamphlets, books, booklets that are used to serve the needs of its local AA community; the use of this literature is not **disapproved** by GSO. Our "Friends of Bill W." District 30 Newsletter is not breaking our personal anonymity at the level of "Press, Radio, or Film" because it is AA Literature. I found some other AA literature that are not A.A. Conference Approved either.

The book "Twelve Tradition" was first published in 1946 which later became "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" was

published in **1952** to tell how A.A. members recover and how the A.A. society functions as a fellowship. Neither of these books are STAMPED conference approved. The black "Twenty-Four Hour A Day" book which was first published in **1954**, dedicated to Bill W. and Dr. Bob, to help members of Alcoholics Anonymous to find the power needed to stay sober each twenty-four hours. *"If we don't take that first drink today, we'll never take it, because it's always today"*. This book is not conference approved. "The Little Red Book" was first published in **1957**, also dedicated to Bill W. and Dr. Bob was written and prepared using weekly notes from the A.A. Beginners Meetings which were conducted to help newcomers and their sponsors to understand the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, published by the Hazelden Foundation. This book is not conference approved. Our Big Book the publication of Alcoholics Anonymous which was first published in April **1939** to show other *alcoholics "PRECISELY HOW WE, the first 100 members of Alcoholics Anonymous, HAVE RECOVERED"*. This book is not conference approved (only the 5th Edition's new AA Stories) and was published by the Works Publishing Company.

The Grapevine Magazine is not AA approved literature. It has had its own approval board since 1954, but Alcoholics Anonymous had no conference to approve its literature until **1967** when the General Services Conference began to approve A.A. literature and identified it by stamping *"This is A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature"*. Also, I discovered not only is the Grapevine Magazine Not Conference Approved A.A. literature but neither is the Serenity Prayer, the Lord's Prayer, A.A. Chips and Medallions, or the A.A. Preamble.

To me, it is not important whether A.A. four major literary works were **Approved**. But, were they **Proven**? These 4 books, Twenty-Four Hours A Day book, the Little Red Book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, and the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book have been **proven** to provide guidance and help to millions of alcoholics to recover from the helpless, hopeless state of incomprehensible demoralization caused by alcoholism. In Loving Service, Antoinette B.

30th District Committee Member

Probably the most helpful thing I can do for individual AA's and for our Fredericksburg regional fellowship is to share information and share my experience with service in recovery and our 12 Traditions. I've been active in the AA service structure since I was about one year sober. I was asked to serve as General Service Representative ("GSR") for the Progress in Recovery step study group. Today I believe this was an efficient way for God to teach me about patience, tolerance and humility! One way my self-will shows up is thinking I know what needs to be done, how it needs to be done and who needs to do it. The Traditions and Concepts of AA offer something completely different! Things like trying to make unanimous decisions, valuing minority opinions, working together collectively and trying to act selflessly. I believe it's truly a miracle there were rooms here where I could get sober. And I've been taught that gratitude is an action word. When I take action to uphold our Traditions, I'm repaying the gift of those who came before me -- people who cared enough to preserve our AA way of life, even when they felt uncertain or unpopular. I'm just a garden variety drunk. But with a Higher Power moving in our lives this fellowship of once-desperate alcoholics can place principles

before personalities and create a spiritual organization capable of amazing things. I'm super excited to attend the International Women's Conference in Virginia Beach February 14, 15, 16. I look forward to seeing GSRs from our local groups at the Virginia Area Spring Assembly April 1-3 at the Washington Dulles Airport Marriott. Here are the details so GSRs can arrange for their hotel stay.

Event	Date/District	Location	Cost	Phone Number	Deadline
VAC 2016	April 1-3, 2016	Washington Dulles	\$104 per night	703-471-9500	3/10/2016
Spring Assembly	5/Fairfax	Airport Marriott			

Let me know if I can help with your Assembly trip or anything else related to service in our District. I can be reached at dcm@aadistrict30va.org. Thank you! Lisa B, DCM

7th Tradition No Dues or Fees Basket

Still new in sobriety, I was sitting in a meeting. I saw a large cake sitting on a table in the back of the room, so I suspected we were having a celebration. During the passing out of the chips, a gentleman in the back of the room got up and shouted out, "thirty-four years!" I was excited to hear what someone sober for 34 years had to say. As the older-timer stood there in silence for a long moment, I saw a single tear drop out of his eye and run down his face. He finally said, "I am just so grateful for the AA program and the AA fellowship. I owe my life to AA and to all you wonderful people who have helped me so much in my new way of life."

Then he pulled out of his pocket a GSO stamped, addressed envelope to New York and held it up for all to see. He said it was an AA Birthday Contribution Envelope. After the meeting the old-timer approached me to see if I have any questions because he notice I was a newcomer. I was curious about his Birthday Envelope so I asked him about it. He explained how AA needs money in order to function. AA gets money through literature sales and group voluntary contributions. However, due to Internet availability of AA literature, our sales have gone down and so has the money. That is why he always sends his AA Birthday Contribution Envelop to GSO yearly. He said if every AA member with one or more years sober contributed \$1.00 per each year of sobriety AA could run without literature sales. "So that's why I will always do my part", he said. He told me he had a great idea, "When you get your first years sober, why don't you send \$1.00 in for your first year and each year on your anniversaries thereafter?" I responded that sounded like a great idea. As he walked away he said, "Remember young man, gratitude is an action word".

I hope that you enjoyed me sharing about the Birthday Contribution Envelop. By the way, I did take the older-timer's suggestion. Also, we would like to say thanks to everyone for your generous donations made to the 30th District 7th Tradition No Dues or Fees Basket this month and last month.

Sincerely, Jeff K.

Tribute to Seamus

My Name Is Debbie and I'm An Alcoholic: I feel honored to write this article about Seamus who is a very special man to me. Many of us around the Rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous who knew Seamus loved and greatly respected him. Seamus was a carefree guy who loved riding his bicycle and playing volleyball in Kenmore Park. If he stopped to talk to you, you had better have some time to listen because he could talk your ear off. He was so

proud of his kids. He would tell us all about them, especially Catlin and how she was becoming a lawyer. But Good Ole Seamus didn't say much at a meeting, but when he did share in a meeting, what he shared with us always meant so much to us. Seamus would never judge anyone, and he always accepted everyone right where they were; that is what we all loved about him the most. He never complained about anything even when he was very sick and laid dying in my home. I will never forget that day when I heard that Seamus was in Mary Washington Hospital. I went down to see him, and after everyone had left, he looked at me and said that he didn't want his kids to see him in Hospice. I had a battle between my heart and my head, and my heart won out. So I asked him if he wanted to leave Hospice and come home with me. When Seamus said yes to my invitation, I broke down, cried, and he cried too.

One thing that I can share about Seamus is that he never complained about anything while he was a guest in my home. He was a true blessing for me and everyone who helped him. The people in the rooms of AA stepped up to the plate and gave Seamus an ending to his life that any King would deserve to have. For instance, we gave Seamus bedside concerts, in-house massages, chef prepared meals, candle light baths, a lot of love and so much more. His family members and friends traveled from all the around the United States to visit him. In fact, some even came from other countries to spend time with Seamus. Through all of his pain and suffering he showed all of us so much love until the very end.

Within the AA community, to know him was to love, respect, and remember him. He is still being quoted as saying "I come to meetings because I have better things to do." Nothing beats coming to meetings to reinforce the need not to pick up that first drink today. Seamus taught us how to live as an AA member and how to die as a loving caring person. He'll be greatly missed, but his words of wisdom will live on in our hearts forever. *"I come to meetings because I have better things to do." In Loving Service Debbie W. w/Service Dog*

My Story – Diane K. of Brooks Park

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 24 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.

Amy's Sober Reading Guide

Grapevine (GV) Daily Quote Book – GV32; paperback, \$10.99 www.aagrapevine.org: Finally! A daily quote/meditation book that is quick and to the point, but offers so much more. This is new since 2014. It has a quote for every day of the year from previous Grapevine writings. Besides the quote for the day, you get the name of the article it came from and the book in which it was originally published. I really like the fact that if I want the whole story, I can find it easily in its full context. It is also available for iBook, NOOK and Kindle. Don't have the money to spend? There is a solution. If you go to the Grapevine website, you can sign up for the daily quote to be delivered to your inbox. PS: if you really need words of wisdom every four years on February 29th, this might not be the book for you; they leaped over Leap Year. Amy D.

Miss Gabby thanks you all for sharing your experience, strength, and hope regarding the January/February newsletter topic where **Ms. 30-Day Wonder** wrote, "I have been sober for 30 days. I have decided to leave my husband, quit my job, and move in with my Boyfriend who I met in treatment. To start the discussion on this topic, **Miss Gabby responded**, "... the Old Timers told her not to make any important decisions for the 1st year".

Many of our Fellowship responded by sharing their experience, strength, and hope on the topic. Some shared that when they got home from treatment their spouses still treated them just like they were still drinking. Some said they fought with their spouses tooth and nail which usually resulted in their past behaviors being thrown in their faces. Some said their non-drinking spouses were on a worst "dry-drunk" than they were. Which finally resulted in failed marriages. However, one couple shared that they met in treatment, have 2 sons, have been

married and reasonably happy for more than 25 years. There even was a few of our Fellowship who shared they had been divorced and remarried again to each other after several years of separation.

Dear Miss Gabby,

I have been sober for a while now. My wife stays on the phone all day long with her Al-Anon friends. When she's not on the phone talking she's at meetings. I'm not going to tell you what's not happening in the bedroom! I'm thinking about having an affair with this lady in the Fellowship. She listens and understands me. *Signed, **Married and Lonely***

Dear Mr. Married and Lonely,

I don't have any experience on this topic so I asked one of our Fellowship. He shared "13 stepping is just like drinking alcohol. Any problem you pour alcohol on, only makes it worst". He shared that he started having a weekly "date night" and "quarterly romantic retreats" with his wife, **no** cell phones and **no** kids instead of only hanging out with his AA buddies. Finally he shared, "I'm glad I started having an affair with my wife instead of that pretty girl in the Fellowship who understands". *Mr. Married and Lonely*, let's see what others of our Fellowship have to share on your topic. *Sincerely yours, **Miss Gabby***

Miss Gabby would love to hear your experience, strength, and hope on the topic from **Mr. Married and Lonely** at VAC District 30, P.O. Box 3202, Fredericksburg, VA 22402, or email at 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. Please scan and

email these items. May's Newsletter Absolute Deadline is Friday April 22nd after the 3rd Wednesday District Meeting.



Announcements and Birthdays

- Alicia G. 3/1 26 years Step Sisters
- Rosalind 3/3 5 years Chancellor
- Randolph P. 3/4 1 year, Wed Brooks Park
- Eileen J. 3/17 17 years, Brooks Park
- Theresa S. 3/18 14 year Brooks Park
- Diane K. 3/20 24 years VFW 10:30am
- MoJo 3/24 5 years Donut/Misfits
- Jim B. 4/7 9 years Misfits
- Christa B 4/7 3 years Misfits
- Mike F. 4/10 27 years Misfits
- Jim M. 4/12 6 years Misfits

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

Family Movie Night and Pot Luck, every Sunday night dining starts at 6:30 and the movie starts at 7:00.m. Located at 11720 Main Street, Suite 104, Fredericksburg, VA.

April 1-3 Virginia Area GSR Spring Assembly at the Washington Dulles Airport Marriott.

Saturday April 30, 2016, Annual Spring Fling Bar-B-Que Roast Dinner and Dance at 11720 Main Street, Suite 104, Fredericksburg, VA. From 6 - 11 pm. Includes Pot Luck Bar-B-Que Dinner, Fellowship and Dancing, Raffles Tickets, and a Guest Speakers. Sponsored by AA Boys to Men Group.

Hot-Line Subcommittee Chair 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 or (540) 656-2882.

