



DISTRICT #30 NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS of **BILL W.**

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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 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.

District Committee Member (DCM)

What a bittersweet article to write! This is my last chance to reach out through this newsletter as DCM for District 30. What a humbling privilege it has been. As of this writing, I have no idea where my Higher Power and the "spirit of rotation" will send me next - but just for today I'm up for a new adventure. I was taught to place principles before personalities. Also, that humility is the foundation of our A.A. program. Therefore, I will refrain from naming each trusted servants here, as much as I would love to. You are truly the Fredericksburg Area's guardians of our 12 Traditions. I am deeply grateful that there were rooms for me to get sober in that are alive with good recovery. Thanks to each of you for making sure that the hand of AA will always be here in our community. In September we elected new District 30 officers. Welcome to our new DCM - Jim C., ADCM - Methian C., Secretary - Allison M., and Treasurer - Tom. I am counting on everyone involved in our district to support them in 2017 - 2018.

We need service work volunteers, bring-a-dish food and money donations, to make sure that our Thanksgiving Alcothon at the Brooks Park Fire Station and the Chancellor groups; our Christmas Alcothon at Dorothy Hart Community Center; and our New Year's Eve Alcothon at the Promises Club will be a success this year. We look forward to seeing you at these A.A. annual lifesaving events. Farewell, Lisa B, DCM

My Story -- Not For The First Year

Somewhere I heard that there should be no relationships for the first year but this relationship was different. We were different. We met when he was 4 months and I was 1 month sober. There were no sparks, fireworks, or trumpets. We would say hi at meetings and see each other at the Aunt Sarah's for the after meeting meetings. Gradually, things changed.



One evening after a meeting he asked me if I wanted to go see a

movie. It sounded like a good idea to me. Unfortunately, the movie that we went to see wasn't showing. So, he suggested we go back to his place and watch a movie on his VCR. That also sounded like a good idea. Unfortunately, the VCR was broken. (Although it worked fine the next day) We moved in together within a month and started on this road of happy destiny. We made it for a little over a year when he decided that we needed to go separate ways and I needed to move out.

I was devastated. I believed we were in love and could "make" it work. Fortunately, we didn't make it work. I moved out and at the age of 30 and for the first time in my life, I was responsible for me. I had to get a place to live, have the electricity turned on, get groceries, go to work, pay bills...etc. I was afraid, hurt, and lonely. But, by this time, I had learned that "nothing, absolutely nothing happens in God's world by mistake" and that God was offering me a growth opportunity. I wasn't real pleased with the idea and I didn't want to have the responsibility. But what I learned during this time was that I really am ok. When I put my trust in God and I practice the principles outlined in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, I am going to be ok. It was during this time that I developed a relationship with God and I began to trust and appreciate the women in the fellowship. I learned that I don't have to fear being alone or being responsible for me. I learned that I do not have to have a man in my life to make me whole. If I have a man in my life, it is because that is what I choose - not what I have to have.

Once I learned this lesson, this man and I got back together and shortly thereafter, got married. We were married at the 1985 Virginia State Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous in Richmond Virginia. The ceremony took place right after the Saturday morning speaker. We went home, had a quick honeymoon and returned for the Saturday night speaker and dance. The Sunday morning speaker, Art Graham, performed the ceremony. My sponsor was my matron of honor. The groom's sponsor acted as best man. All guests wore nametags that had their first name and last initial. It truly was an AA wedding. And we continue to have an AA marriage today. Right after we married, he had the chance to get back into his career of choice. So, we moved away from our secure group of friends and support. I did not want to go but, I married him...I had to go with him. And, once more, nothing happens by mistake. The move, and his traveling, allowed us to grow independently of each other. He grew, I grew, and we grew. On August 24 of this year, we celebrated 31 years of marriage. I doubt those old timers in Richmond would have ever believed it.

In the past 31 years we've had our ups and downs - all marriages do. But from each struggle, we've learned something that has helped the marriage grow stronger. Early on, we decided that sobriety had to come first and that anything that threatened that, had to go, including each other. We learned that it is essential for us to each have a life separate from each other so that we each have more to contribute to the relationship. We share a program of recovery but we don't necessarily work it the same. What works for him may not work for me and visa versa. We share similar interests but also have interests we explore on our own. We try to practice the principles in all situations and try to incorporate the spiritual tools in our daily life.

My favorite tool and one that has pulled me out of good old self righteous indignation more times than not comes from the 10th step. "It is a spiritual axiom that every time we are disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong with us." (pg. 90, 12 & 12) This doesn't mean I am wrong. It means that how I respond to the situation may not be the best. It means that if I am disturbed, I need to look at my part. I need to ask myself, "Do I want to be right or, do I want to be happy?" Or, "in 5 years, what difference will it make?" I've learned that just because I like the toilet seat down doesn't necessarily mean that is the way it has to be. Maybe I should put it up. We have found that trust and respect are essential. We give each other permission to be wrong and make mistakes. Over the years, we have built a good marriage but we've formed an even. —Suzanne H.—

Newcomer

Dear Editor, thanks for asking me to say something for the District 30 Newsletter. I am only coming around because I'm on paper. I started just doing the minimum meeting attendance that the Courts demanded me to do. Then I heard someone say they went to a meeting a day for the first 90 days. So I just started doing that and not drinking. I saw this other dude who is on paper too just like me pick up a 24 hours chip and the hold room clapped and cheered for him so I got up and got one. They clapped and cheered for me too. In fact they even brought up a topic on Step One. I guess that step must have had something to do with people who are just getting started. So I'm thinking the topic must have been for me too. That meeting made me feel really important. I heard the word newcomer a lot, so I guess I must be a newcomer to A.A. But I'm not sure if I am an alcoholic. Cause I only drank one fifth a day and sometimes only two or three 40's. In the first place, I'm not really here for my drinking. The only reason that I'm here is because, while I was driving along minding my own business, the police pulled me over for reason at all. Anyway, I caught a DWI charge. If I hadn't caught that charge, I would definitely not be here. But I do notice that I don't feel so mad all the time anymore at the meetings like I did when I first started coming almost 45 days ago. The handshakes and hugs do take some time to get used to, but they do feel good. I do have one question for you. As I am going to a meeting each day I notice people are wearing Tee shirts and hats that say "Rule 62". What is that all about? Newcomer Tom C.

Hello Newcomer Tom C. The long version of the origin of Rule 62 may be read in the Alcoholics Anonymous 12x12 book Tradition Four on pages 148-149. In early 1940, this Middleton A.A. group decided their town needed a great big alcoholic center to sober up their drunks. In their enthusiasm, the head promoter

drew up comprehensive plans for three separate corporations to spread the message—a club, a clinic, and a loan office. The wealthy town's folk of Middleton brought into the idea. The head promoter submitted his blueprint, outlined in 61 rules,



regulations, and by-laws, to the A.A.'s New York Headquarters Office. Bill W. replied that even less grand schemes had failed. In the past when you add out-siders' money, plus medication, and education to the Alcoholics Anonymous program that spells disaster. However, the Middleton A.A. group was autonomous, and had the right to ignore Bill W.'s warning. And so they did. The results were as predicted, great confusion and disaster. The head promoter wrote yet again to New York, basically saying, "You were right and we was wrong". He said he wished they had paid closer attention to Bill W. and A.A. past experiences. Then he did something else that is an A.A. classic. The head promoter enclosed a card about golf-score size. The cover read: Middleton Group #1. Rule #62." Once the card was unfolded, a single pungent sentence leaped to the eye: "Don't take yourself too damn seriously." This group taught A.A. true humility, how to admit when you're wrong, laugh at yourself, and keep moving on to better things. ILS, Antoinette B, Editor

The Night Before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas, we were all in the club, Enjoying a meeting, instead of a pub. The ashtrays were clean, and the coffee was made, The Big Books were out and then we all prayed. When out in the lot, there arose such a clatter; We all



jumped up to see what was the matter. The Chair with his Big Book, and I with my smokes; Headed outside to find these two blokes. They came inside and sat at a table; And said that they'd chair, as soon as they're able. To start with, they said, "It's more than not drinking; It's doing your best to have God fix your thinking." "First Things First!" and the slogans we used, Help keep the newcomer from getting confused. Step 1 is a start, they said we should know, But after Step 2, we'll be all aglow. We make a decision when we got to Step 3, Step 4 was a bit tough, we all could agree. Step 5 is the one where we let it all out. And after Step 6 and 7, we're left with no doubt. When we got to Step 8, we made our full list; And then with Step 9, we have to persist. After Step 9, more promises ring true; We didn't just make that up, right out of the blue.. After that, it's on with the rest; The things we must do, to be our best. Step 10 helps keep it clean whenever there's a rift; That's why it says "when we were wrong" and not "If". Step 11 tells us we pray for knowledge and power; And that we insist on enjoying life, we are not dour. Step 12 we carry the message of faith, love, and hope; After having a spiritual awakening we no longer mope!

They put on their coats and got ready to leave; A very good end, for this Christmas Eve. As to their names, we only could guess; Must have been Bill W. and Dr. Bob S. The two men hopped into a '35 Ford, And as they pulled out, one of them roared: "We leave this message, for our sisters and brothers: Trust God, clean house, and be of service to others. And for all of you people, I just want to say: Have a nice holiday, and don't drink today!" **THE END** - Author Unknown -

Just Pedal

At first I saw God as my observer, my judge, keeping track of the things I did wrong, so as to know whether I merited heaven or hell when I die. He was out there sort of like a president. I recognized his picture when I saw it, but I really didn't know Him. But later on, when I met God, it seemed as though life were rather like a bike ride, but it was a tandem bike, and I noticed that God was at the back, helping me pedal. I don't know when it was that he suggested that we change places, but life has not been the same since.



When I had control I knew the way. It was rather boring, but predictable. It was the shortest distance between two points. But when he took the lead, He knew delightful long cuts, up mountains, and through rocky places at breakneck speeds. It was all I could do to hang on! Even though it looked like madness, He said, "Pedal!" I worried and was anxious and asked, "Where are you taking me?" He laughed and didn't answer! And I started to learn to trust. I forgot my boring life and entered into the adventure. And when I'd say "I'm scared," He'd lean back and touch my hand." He took me to people with gifts that I needed; gifts of healing, acceptance and joy. They gave me gifts to take on my journey. And we were off again. He said, 'Give the gifts away; they're extra baggage, too much weight.' So I did, to the people we met, and I found that in giving I received, and still our burden was light.

I did not trust Him, at first, in control of my life. I thought He'd wreck it; but he knows bike secrets, knows how to make it bend to take sharp corners, knows how to jump to clear high rocks, knows how to fly to shorten scary passages. And I am learning to shut up and pedal in the strangest places, and I'm beginning to enjoy the view and the cool breeze on my face with God as my delightful constant companion. And when I'm sure I just can't do anymore, He just smiles and says, "Pedal!" --Contributed by Dennis W., Author Unknown--

An Excellent Gift

Have you ever been stuck at home, sick, or maybe stranded by a storm, and wished you could get to a meeting? Been traveling for fun or profit and been unable or unwilling to go to a "strange" meeting, but felt the need for some tangible conscious contact? Have you ever gotten tired of hearing the same old things from the same old people, in the same old places? Wanted to hear a new slant on one of the Steps, or God forbid, learn something about the practical application of the Traditions? Have you ever heard of the AA Grapevine? It is our monthly "Meeting in Print" and recognized by the General Service Conference as the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous since 1986.

The Grapevine was founded in 1944 by six AA members in the New York area. Bill W. was a frequent contributor, and wrote more than 150 articles for the publication. The Traditions first appeared in the Grapevine in 1946. The Grapevine has been published continuously since those early days. The magazine has a staff of professional editors, writers and artists, who are AA members. Most of the articles are written by members of the Fellowship. The Grapevine is published monthly, it arrives in a

plain black plastic envelope to protect your anonymity. It is about 5.25 inches by 7.5 inches (roughly the dimensions of the Reader's Digest) and usually runs about 64 pages plus cover. It is very portable, so you can carry a copy with you where ever you go.

I have subscribed to the print version of the Grapevine for many years. I have enjoyed the articles published there, laughed at the humor that it carries, and at various times been pleased, provoked, or appalled by what I read. That is part of the beauty of this publication. If I maintain an open mind, I can learn. I come away with a firmer grasp of what I believe, and what makes this program work for so many. I am often reminded of the things I do to remain sober, one day at a time. I am pleased to say that for several years, my home group, the Misfits, has subscribed to 5 copies of the Grapevine. These copies are available to anyone who wants to read them. The wonderful people who carry meetings into local correctional facilities always accept contributions of Grapevines for the inmates, if you want to recycle your copy after reading it. The Grapevine is also moving into the digital age. You can subscribe to the online version of the magazine and now there is a subscription app for the iPhone and iPad. Apps for other mobile devices are expected in the near future, visit: <http://www.aagrapevine.org> Wow! The Grapevine sounds like an excellent gift. - Mike F.



You know you've been in AA a few 24 hrs. when... You meet someone for the first time and embrace them with a hug before shaking their hand!" *Written By Kirstin and Gang*

Dear Readers, Thanks for sharing your experience, strength, and hope regarding the September/October newsletter topic from **Mr. Stuck...** "The thrill is gone and I feel stuck. I don't know how to get the passion back into our lives together." A member wrote he could identify with Mr. Stuck. After a few years he and his girlfriend got stuck into a loveless relationship. Many of their problems arose because they were not living Rule 62. They fought a lot because they both constantly took themselves too damn seriously. Another A.A. member said he realized that fore play doesn't start in the bedroom, it starts at the breakfast table. When he started showering his wife with acts of kindness, love, and respect she reluctantly respond at first. Today they are no longer stuck in a loveless relationship. Finally one member admitted that she found herself withholding sex to punish her husband if he had been a bad little boy. Then she felt rejected when he withheld his love from her. One night they heard this oldtimer shared in a meeting that women give sex for love and men give love for sex. They both wanted to get what we wanted so they decided to change their way of thinking. I guess that oldtimer was right an even swamp anit no swindle.

-- *Sincerely yours, Miss Gabby* --

Dear Miss Gabby,

We have been married and divorced twice. We are so happy living apart as best friends. Our families and friends don't believe we are still divorced. We are not intimately involved, but we see each other daily and talk constantly throughout each day. We find ourselves tempted to marry each other for the third

time. But we are both afraid of getting angry and hurt all over again. Plus we are really enjoying the last 5 years of our divorced relationship a lot better as best friends living in separate houses with our own separate lives. *Signed, Happily 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 address or e-mail above.

Birthdays and Announcements

November

- 2nd Ray 25 yrs. Wed/Brooks Park
- 5th TRA Larry 39 yrs. Sat/Brooks Park
- 6th Shawn K. 29 yrs. Sun/VFW
- 19th William C. 28 yrs. Sat/Brooks Park
- 20th Norma F. 24 yrs. No BS
- Mike S. 15 yrs. Misfits
- Jake P. 28 yrs. Misfits

December

- 5th Ramona S. 10 yrs. Mon/Brooks Park
- 27th Roger H. 23 yrs. Bowling Green

January

- 1st Cowboy Tom 45 yrs. Misfits
- 2nd Dave W. 3 yrs. Mon/Brooks Park
- 4th Woody W. 13 yrs. Sober & Happy
- 4th John L. 42 yrs. Brooks Park
- 13th Toni R. 30 yrs. Lady Smith
- 15th Karl K. 41 yrs. Wed/Brooks Park
- 20th Nick S. 3 yrs. Fri/Brooks Park
- 25th Antoinette B 35 yrs. Misfits

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

November 24th Thanksgiving Dinner Alcathon, in the morning at Brooks Park Fire House, 205 Butler Road; and 5:00 pm - 11:00 pm at Chancellor Group, 7300 Old Plank Road. Please bring a dish to share.

2 Thanksgiving Day Football Games will be shown at the Promise Club, 11720 Main Street 12:30 pm Vikings vs the Lions

then 4:00 pm Redskins vs Cowboys. If you are a sports buff or just want to hang out in a safe place, bring a dish; let's have some fun with some other sober alcoholics for the holiday.

December 10th Holiday Meeting on Wheels - Motor Coach Journey to Busch Gardens "Christmas Town" All are welcomed. The bus will leave promptly from Frist Baptist Church, 2932 King Street, Alexandria. Look forward to open to Open and Speakers meeting on the bus. At the park enjoy huge holiday light displays, rides, and show until 9:00 pm. \$65.00 ticket includes round trip transportation, snacks, and park admission.

December 24th, 25th, 26th 2016 AA Alcathon. Join us for Around the Clock Food, Fellowship, and Fun. Located at The Dorothy Hart Community Center, 408 Canal Street, Fredericksburg. Bring a dish to share.

Speakers and Activities:

- 24th 12:15, 3:30; 8:15 → Photo w/Santa@5:00 pm
- 25th 11:15, 5:15; 8:15 → 50/50 Raffle@4:00; Sobriety Countdown@4:30
- 26th 10:15; 1:15

Christmas Dinner will be serve 2:00 p.m. on the 25th.

December 31th New Year's Eve Alcathon will start 7:00 pm - until, at the Promises Club, 11720 Main Street, #104. Bring a dish to share. This event is still being planned so check the website for more information.

January 6th - 7th Winter 2017 VAC Meeting at Clarion Hotel Historic District Williamsburg, 351 York Street, Williamsburg, Virginia. Rooms \$49.00 plus tax, registration deadline 12/20/2016, (757) 229-4100.

January 10th GSR Workshop, all are welcomed. From 7:00 - 800 pm, at the Northern Virginia Intergroup, 10400 Eaton Place, Fairfax, VA 22030, (703) 293-9753.

April 7th - 14th 2017, Spring Assembly at 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) 786-8321.

			
<p>I'm Chuck...I'm messed up and stupid. I made an awful mistake on my job and I don't know what to do. I'm just one big mess and I hate myself for being so stupid!</p>  <p>Misfits Group AA</p>	<p>I'm George, an alcoholic. The Big Book teaches us when we are wrong to promptly admit it. Step Ten usually starts my amends process followed by action.</p> 	<p>When I start to feeling like I'm a stupid F-ing#@!* worthless side-winder I try to remember Rule 62.</p> 	<p>You're right Roger. When I'm wrong or wronged, not taking myself so damn serious helps to get me right-sized again.</p> 