



## DISTRICT #30 NEWSLETTER

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

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

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Vol. 4, Issue 11

**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. 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.

#### In The Spirit of Service

Dear Readers,

In the spirit of service, my commitment a Newsletter Editor has come to an end. I would like to take the time to thank you one and all for every story, cartoon, idea, and assistance offered to me during this rewarding two years of service time in my recovery. Writing has been my life-long hobby. Therefore, I greatly enjoyed this rewarding experience which turned out instead of being a chore, it has been a labor of love. The Friends of Bill W. is going to be in good hands. Our new Editor and point-of-contact is Kirstin G. Please give her the same loving cooperation and assistance that you have so graciously given to me. --Thanks again, ILS Antoinette B.

#### Non-Affiliation

Hello Gang, I read this enlightening article from one of our Grapevine magazines about non-affiliation. I think it will help my fellow members to know that God is just like the A. A. Preamble states regarding our Fellowship. God is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization, or institution. God does not engage in any controversy and neither endorses or opposes any causes. I wanted to share my thought on this article because it helped me with my hang up about the God of my understanding. To cut down on confusion, I believe God should remain anonymous in Alcoholics Anonymous...bearing no name or no face as stated in our Twelfth Tradition. I also love the way leadership works in A.A. There is only one ultimate authority—a loving God not you or me. --Submitted by Michelle G.

#### The Promises In Reverse

If we are NOT painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be drunk before we leave the parking lot. We are going to know a new pain and a new misery. We

will regret our deeds and repeat them over and over. We will comprehend the word chaos and we will know calamity. No matter how far down the road we stagger, we will wonder where we are going. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will intensify. We will lose interesting things and gain relations with strange fellows. Self-seeking will be constant. Our whole attitude will be on the lookout for the cops. Fear of people and economic insecurity will leave us – homeless.

We will intuitively know how to stay drunk with little or no money. We will suddenly begin to think that God does not exist. Are these extravagant promises? Probably not. They are being practiced daily, sometimes insanely, sometimes deadly. They will continue to happen if we keep drinking.

--Submitted by John of the Welcome Group

#### My Story – It's Payback Time

My family had a poor humble beginning in Sault Ste Marie, Michigan. I was one of eight children; four boys and four girls.



The doctor told my Ma I had a serious heart problem. I couldn't go to school anymore, couldn't play outside, I couldn't run, I couldn't do nothing but stay in bed. What did he say that for, it was payback time; I would show that old quack he didn't know nuthin. Everything he said I couldn't do, I did do and more. I guess I showed him.

One night while we were sleeping on the pallet on the floor we heard this loud popping noise. We kids went playing under the house where we had heard the noise and we found homemade Moon Shine our parents had hid under the house. We sunk in and each got a sip, this was my first taste of liquor at 11 years old. That one taste of alcohol lite a fire under me that burned for 27 more years. The more I sipped, the better I felt, the higher I got, and the more I sipped.

I fail in love, got married, and had some kids. One day my husband and I got to fighting and he beat me something furious. When he went to bed, it was payback time. I gave him a beat down in his sleep with an iron skillet and broke his

arm in two places. Needless to say that was my last beating and the last day of my marriage. I had five boys so I had to work two jobs to support us. I'm not too proud of my behavior as a mother. During my drinking days if them boys got out of line, it was payback time. They got a real beat down when they got home. I made some bad choices, if it was get a drink or get food, many times the drink overpowered my desire to put food on the table.

I knew I had an anger problem. I also, knew I had a drinking problem. What I did not know was what to do about it and how to not take that first drink. I cried out to 'something' please help me. I didn't know it at the time but when I had to get a second job working down at my boys' school, it was a divine intervention. It was there that I met my first sponsor who sobered me up and took me to my first Alcoholics Anonymous meeting.

After four years of being sober. I did not slip, I premeditatedly planned my first drink. I was on a dry drunk for a few months. It was payback time for you alcoholics in the rooms. I wasn't gonna forgive none of you'll for nuthin. So, huhh! I'll show you, I stopped going to meetings. I brought the Vodka and hid it in the back sit of my car and waited for the excuse I needed to take that first drink.

Well, I took that first drink and it was payback time. Now I realize I didn't hurt you'll alcoholics, you were still sober, going to meetings, and I was the one who was stinking drunk. In a very short period of time my temper was getting the best of me again. I was fighting and hiding out on the Indian Reservation until the police got tired of looking for me. After drinking for a short time all my financial, sleeping around, lying, cheating, and stealing problems returned with a vengeance.

At last, I started going to meetings again. All was not well, but I remember the love and welcome I received at my first meeting my second time around June 15, 1980. After a few meetings I was well back on the beam. It hadn't been all peachy keen. I got burnt badly a few times by fellow alcoholics in these rooms. And it was payback time. Some older timer told not to pay, but to pray for the sick alcoholics that had burned me. I listened to what he told me. Today, I'd rather take my changes with the alcoholics in these rooms than with the alcoholics outside of these rooms.

Now, it is payback time for me. As a result of 37 years of hard work in my recovery program. I'm having an enjoyable relationship with a gentleman whom I adore. I started hanging out with some women in the A.A. rooms who are the real deal. Who would have thought that at 75 years old I would be thinking about cows, sheep, rabbits, chickens, foxes, and Smokey my Labrador retriever? When I'm thinking about

these people and animals that are a part of my life today, I'm not thinking about getting revenge or taking that first drink.

-- Veronica, Miss Sunshine

### **Newcomer's Corner – A Beginner's View**

While I was a late a late bloomer by today's standards (18), my alcoholism progressed rapidly. When I was 23, I got a DUI. I was court ordered to go to 10 AA meetings. It was there that I picked up a 24 hour chip. While I didn't follow any suggestions, get a sponsor, or read the Big Book, a seed was planted. For a long time that seed was a burden. I hated it. Telling me that I was "tired of being sick and tired". I couldn't be an alcoholic I was too young, I didn't drink every day, and I hadn't lost it all. I would always count the days between "incidents". In these "incidents" I said hurtful, cruel things to my friends, family, and boyfriend and at times became very violent. On the outside I was smart, bubbly, happy and I had it all- the home, car, boyfriend, dream job. But on the inside I was insecure, self-conscious, and filled with self-loathing. I felt like a con artist. Any time I received praise there was a voice in the back of my head saying, "You don't deserve this! They don't know what you said to your sister last weekend while you were blacked out."

I couldn't handle it anymore. Instead of surrendering then I just started drinking even harder on the weekends. Friday and Saturday nights were spent in a blackout and Sundays were spent trying to feel better before work on Monday. After going to a concert out of town, I woke up the next morning, still drunk. My phone was dead, I was practically out of gas, my eyes were red, I was wearing clothes and makeup from the night before, and I think Jesus took the wheel that fateful Sunday morning. After arriving home my hands were shaking so bad I could barely wash my hair. Since the wallet I had taken to the concert was now beer soaked, I had to swap it for an old one and a shiny silver coin fell out. It was the 24 hour chip I had picked up three years earlier. I truly believe it was a spiritual experience that got me into AA this time around.

When I walked into my first AA meeting in Fredericksburg a lady handed me a brochure with numbers on it and she gave me a hug. When the Promises were read all I could think was, "YES! YES! I need that!" I cried the whole way home. Today I can honestly say those promises have come true. Throughout the past 17 months I have gained more in this fellowship than I ever dreamed possible. Recently after attending a wedding and getting home at 2 AM I was washing my makeup off when I looked in the mirror. My eyes weren't red, my hair wasn't a hot mess, and my breath didn't reek of alcohol. I remembered everything I had said that night and realized I do like to dance sober. I loved the person looking back at me. I could have

never said that honestly before February 1, 2016. In working with my sponsor (that lady who handed me the Where and When), working the 12 steps with some wonderful ladies, going to meetings, and listening to the wisdom of those in the rooms I now have a relationship with God. Surrendering to my Higher Power has made the biggest difference in my life. I know there will be trials and tribulations on this journey but I now know that I don't have to drink over them one day at a time and I never have to do this alone. -- Lindsay R.

### **The Best AA Wedding Gift**

You've got to be kidding! Your husband left you on your wedding day to go do a twelfth step call? I bet you were mad about that!" This is usually what people say when they hear the story of our wedding day before the Honeymoon. They can't believe I would permit my new husband to go out on a service call just minutes after the reception ended. It wasn't a matter of permitting him; it was a responsibility we both have to be there for the alcoholic who still suffers.

Tom and I met in AA. He has a wonderful, firm recovery program, and that's what first attracted me to him. He has done service for years in our home group, and on the district and area levels. He sponsors a steady stream of men, many of whom have become a part of our everyday life. He has a special commitment to corrections work, born of his own experience while incarcerated in the early 90's.

I was a new divorcee when I came to AA in 1999. Though I was impressed by Tom the first time I met him, I did not go out with him until I had completed a self-imposed "year of purification", during which I applied myself to early recovery issues. We dated for a couple years before Tom popped the question. During that time, we became a couple who made their foundation in AA and its 12 steps and its principles. Tom and I traveled all over the state of Virginia. We attended assemblies and meetings, and volunteered in the local jail. We fell in love while serving each other and other AA's.

On the morning of our wedding day, I was visiting the florist to pick up my flowers. She asked the question I've been asked many times, "How did you and your fiancé meet?" Pause...think...should I tell her the REAL story? This time, my internal guide said, "YES, tell her the truth". "We met at an AA meeting," was my reply. It just so happened that she was having a problem with alcohol herself and she wanted to talk to someone about it. What followed was a beautiful half hour of sharing. I couldn't help but think how great it was to be doing this on my wedding day. Today I was not only The Bride, but also an Alcoholic Bride, and God had found a way to bless me AND this lady who was hurting so much. We parted with goodbyes and a plan for her to get to some meetings.

It came as no surprise to me that Tom would have the opportunity to call on someone later the same day. He went with his sponsor and one of the men he sponsors. Three "generations" of AA recovery. Tom even took a separate car, in case the visit went too long. That way, he could get back to the house and not ignore his guests. As it turns out, the man they went to see was not there, but they tried, just the same.

I figure it's a risky proposition when one alcoholic marries another. After all, we both have a terminal disease that could flare up at any moment. That's why I'm very happy that Tom and I both had a chance to do AA service on our wedding day. The best wedding gift we can give each other is the gift of a sober spouse. Service to others keeps us sober, no matter what day it is. --Contributed by Ellen Z.

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You know you've been in AA a few 24 hrs. when...  
You can't look at a turnover without thinking of your Higher Power.

--By Kirstin & Gang

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### **My AA Truth**

I once heard a catholic priest state that prophets are not old people with beards that lived long ago, but they are people who tell the truth and they are all around us. I think prophet is an apt title for many of the people I have met in AA. They are the many in AA who hold firmly to the principles and calmly speak the truth, a truth that most of the world does not want to hear. The truth that I initially heard in AA was not welcome news to me.

That truth included the following points (which were very threatening to me and my value system): - If I was an alcoholic (and the case was pretty compelling) I could never drink in safety. This included weekends, holidays, weddings, etc. It seemed to me an extreme approach. - I possessed a body that could not tolerate alcohol and a mind I could not trust. My mind was a double agent, it had convinced me it was my best friend while at the same time it was orchestrating my alcoholic demise. - On my own I was no match for the disease of alcoholism. This disease has taken down smarter and better people than me. If I wanted to change my life I needed to do what I most despised, join and participate in a support group. - I needed to undertake a personal recovery process as outlined in the twelve steps of AA. My approach to life had not worked. I needed a new approach, one that was proven to work for alcoholics. - I would need to begin doing business with a higher power. Not having a higher power equals playing God and I had played God poorly for too long. Having applied (sometimes) the wisdom of AA to my life in the form of action for some time, I am astounded and humbled by the

results. The rewards appear to be disproportionate to the effort expended. I find myself being comfortable in my own skin, capable of dealing with all life situations, aware of my limitations, grateful for my life (such as it is at any point in time), and aware of God's unlimited healing power. Having applied (sometimes) the wisdom of AA to my life in the form of action for some time, I am astounded and humbled by the results.

The rewards appear to be disproportionate to the effort expended. I find myself being comfortable in my own skin, capable of dealing with all life situations, aware of my limitations, grateful for my life (such as it is at any point in time), and aware of God's unlimited healing power. I believe that I am in a constant battle with my disease for my life. My disease continues to want me back and is tenacious in its pursuit of my soul. Therefore it is critical that I have as much knowledge of my adversary as possible. Below is some of what I have learned about my disease and its tactics.

My disease: - Is not impressed with the quality of my sobriety  
 - Wants me to be impressed with the quality of my sobriety -  
 Never takes a vacation, or a break - Knows my character defects better than I do - Knows how to exploit my character defects - Wants to separate me from the recovery process and isolate me - Uses my intellect to confuse me - Detests honesty and all spiritual actions - Has extraordinary patience and determination. The good news is that the program of AA, vigorously applied, can overcome this insidious foe. I realize today that the recovery process was everything that I needed but nothing that I would have chosen. I am truly blessed.

--Anonymous

Want to get the word out about your anniversary, an event, or articles, no problem email [friendofbillw82@gmail.com](mailto:friendofbillw82@gmail.com). The article word count should be 1 to 400 words maximum.

**Birthdays and Announcements**

**October**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Mike K. 11 yrs. Misfits
- 5<sup>th</sup> Mustache Rick 32 yrs. Misfits
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Suzanne 35 yrs. Misfits
- 7<sup>th</sup> Dick W. 34 yrs. Misfits
- 10<sup>th</sup> Patty L. 29 yrs. 12x12 Women Mtg
- 11<sup>th</sup> Daniel B 3 yrs. Misfits
- 13<sup>th</sup> Robin C. 44 yrs. 12x12 Women Mtg
- 17<sup>th</sup> Steve J. 11 yrs. Misfits
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Gordon 39 yrs. Hawaii
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Mary W. 35 yrs. 12x12 Women Mtg
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Jeff A. 18 yrs. Misfits
- 26<sup>th</sup> Betty S. 25 yrs. Sober & Happy
- 31<sup>st</sup> Nikki 6 yrs.
- 31<sup>th</sup> Crystal Mike 29 yrs.

**November**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Ray 26 yrs. Wed/Brooks Park
- 5<sup>th</sup> TRA Larry 40 yrs. Sat/Brooks Park
- 6<sup>th</sup> Shawn K. 30 yrs. Sun/VFW
- 19<sup>th</sup> William C. 29 yrs. Sat/Brooks Park
- 20<sup>th</sup> Norma F. 25 yrs. No BS
- Mike S. 16 yrs. Misfits
- Jake P. 29 yrs. Misfits

**Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday, District #30 Meeting;** American Legion Post #55, 461 Woodford Street, at 7:00 p.m.

**October 27<sup>th</sup> Halloween Costume Party** at American Legion Post 55, 461 Woodford Street, at 6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. bring a dish/dessert to share. Join us in a night of prizes, food, fun, and fellowship.

**November 24<sup>th</sup> Thanksgiving Dinner Alcathon,** in the Planning Stages...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.

**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.

