



DISTRICT #30 NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS of **BILL W.**

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Vol. 4, Issue 5

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)

I just returned from an eventful trip to the Virginia Area Summer Meeting where we set the agenda for the upcoming Fall Assembly on October 14th, 15th, and 16th at Virginia Beach. It's remarkable how different the VAC meeting experience is for me as my term as DCM is sun setting - things are actually starting to make sense! I guess I am more proof that just as we start to get the hang of a service position it's time for us to rotate to some new way to serve AA! One highlight of that trip was in-depth conversations about general service and traditions with Mike L. and Stefanie B. We're truly blessed to have so many people that are passionate about general service in District 30!

So much is happening in general service over the next several months in our District. We are creating a 2017 budget and electing new District officers for 2017 and 2018. We'll be hosts for the Virginia Area Corrections workshop on September 24. Our district will be planning the Alcolthon fellowship event for December and hosting the April 7-9, 2017 Spring Assembly. District meetings are typically every third Wednesday at 7:00 pm at Central Rappahannock Regional Library, 1201 Caroline St, Fredericksburg, VA - in the Theatre wing. In October we'll meet at an alternate location at the Promise Club during the library's book sale. Sometimes it's hard to take time out of the life I love to go sit in business meetings, but driving home in a rainstorm I was full of gratitude for all of the other trusted servants who are willing to choose character-building over comfort in order to serve Virginia A.A. It made me remembered something I learned from a Fredericksburg oldtimer who often said, "I'm here because I have better things to do." Thank you for letting me serve.

Lisa B, DCM

We Are Not A Glum Lot

As promised, the first burger hit the grill at 11:00 am Monday morning. In 36 years of sobriety I have never experienced anything like I did at this year's 4th of July picnic. It was really special for me. The atmosphere of peace and serenity was truly an expression of what the Big Book calls the "Sunlight of the

Spirit." It was like beholding something out of a Norman Rockwell painting. We ALL came together as one big happy family without any arguing, loud disagreements, fighting and cussing, or any other negative calamity. As an unhappy ex-drinker I certainly don't miss those days filled with the hideous Four Horsemen—terror, bewilderment, frustration, and despair held together by fear. So it was such a delight to see everyone around me laughing and enjoying each other safely without a care in the world.

It was pouring down rain all day long. However, the more the rain poured down, the more the people poured into our Lorelli Park shelters and tents with their families, friends, and lots of delicious foods. As I sat under the tent watching the kids running around in the rain, playing and splashing about in water puddles, it took me back to a very special time in my childhood. Why I remembered it just like it was yesterday when my family would get together on Sunday evenings. After supper the grown folks would sit around on the porch talking and telling tall tales. While us kids would be having the time of our lives playing games like hid and seek and catching lightning bugs.

One of the 4th of July picnic's highlights was the 50/50 raffle when the pot got up to \$755.00. We had the sobriety time count down. I was so excited when I was chosen to give the newcomer person with 4 days sober their first Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. At the 3:00 p.m. A.A. meeting, we had 34 year sober Big Taylor up from Richmond and he gave out the sobriety chips as only Big Tee himself could do them just like I remember him doing for many years at the VFW Sunday Morning meeting. This was followed by a powerful open discussion meeting under three tents in the pouring rain. The more it rained, the more we shared with each other our experience, strength, and hope.

It was a genuine blessing after more than 36 years of sobriety to see this large bunch of drunks as they worked side by side, played side by side, and ate side by side, happy joyous, and sober. The potluck style dishes were so delicious and wonderfully prepared. Every time I turned around one of us at my table was eating something new and delicious. I can't begin to thank all the people enough who made this blessed event possible. People like Daniel...well I'm afraid if I start naming names I might leave someone out so I'm gonna have to leave that alone. But I am grateful that I attended this fun event. We of the A.A. Fellowship are certainly not a glum lot. ILS, Veronica

Beyond My Control

Recently, driving to work, after getting some news that my first sponsor would refer to as "high class problems", I found myself getting more and more agitated with driving through Fredericksburg's crowded roads. Construction, people cutting me

off, red lights; all things beyond my control. As I slowed to a stop for the impending red light, I found myself yelling and making hand gestures at an inanimate object. As I looked to the right, I noticed an A.A. member of the fellowship patiently waiting for the crosswalk. I laughed to myself, turned my music down and asked her how her day was going. After a quick talk, and getting right sized, I remember that I should try my best to practice the spiritual principles of recovery in all my affairs. Even when I don't think anyone is around.

I can't afford to stay angry or irritated, because it poisons my heart of hearts and blocks my purpose for the day of walking in unconditional love. And to stay sober, and to do my best living life one day at a time. So, after my chance meeting and some time for reflection, my "high class problem" still exists, but I have faith that everything will work out exactly how it is supposed to. That I can take it one day at a time and not stress out about things that are beyond my control. As long as I try my best, in this given day, I can go to bed sober and deal with my problems as they come up, rather than stress out over things that are in the future or beyond my control. I noticed when I get right sized so I can get out of the way and let God be God, things usually work out a lot better than I possibly imagined. –Anonymous

My Story – Dream to Nightmare to Purposeful Life

I had this surreal dream in which I was trying to talk myself awake. "Wake up you're driving!" "Wake up you're driving!" "No, you're just dreaming that." I woke up, blood coming out of my ears, nose, and eyes. My teeth were knocked out and scattered all across the car interior. I tried to open the door and get out when I realized the engine was crushed in on my lap. I was stuck. I knew I was going to die.



I said a prayer: "God I have had a good life, but please help my family and loved ones to understand that and find some comfort!" As soon as I finished that simple prayer a peace came over me that was so profound and consuming that it is hard to explain in words.

I was prepared to die. Seven hours later they found me. They extricated me and rush me to the hospital by helicopter. The initial effort to save my life was 19 hours of surgery followed by a second operation of ten hours. The doctors, after seeing the severity of the damage that was done to my body, couldn't explain how I was still alive. They started using the "miracle" word. Of course, I was intoxicated when this happened. Not only drunk but I had taken a couple of valium, in order to get to sleep when I got home, so I could wake up rested for work the next day. The local police authorities never charged me with anything. I think they thought I was as good as dead so what was the point.

This prayer that I prayed for my family that day was my first unselfish prayer that I had ever prayed in my entire life. I firmly believe that my first unselfish prayer was enough for God to decide there may be some use for me! This incident was one of many where I may have seen the unmanageability of my life caused by alcohol, but I didn't. My rationale was that of a drunk. I thought I better not do valium anymore and try to make it home

before it kicked in. I never, for not even one moment, thought that I may have a drinking problem or a drug problem.

Needless to say I didn't get sober immediately. I would go on to drink for seven more years. When I was introduced to A.A., I immediately felt as if I was home at last. I will never forget that feeling. Here were people that drank the way I did who had found a solution. More importantly, they were willing to help me when I could not help myself. They gave me the roadmap to recovery and for me a new life. I accomplished more in my first ten years of sobriety than all my previous years of life. They also helped me to make my nightmare drinking story into the biggest asset I have to use to help others like me!! I'm still sober more than thirty years later. It is a real A.A. miracle how the dream turned into a nightmare and the nightmare turned into a purposeful life. –Anonymous—

Recovery Does Not Have To Be Scary

It is that time of year when fear takes us up to Halloween which is filled with scary themes of ghost in our closets and blood thirsty goblins. Though this holiday is scary, it is important to remember that recovery does not have to be scary. There is a fear of not knowing what the future will be that reminds me of what Herbert Spencer told us. "There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance—that principle is contempt prior to investigation." Spencer's statement certainly rang true regarding my first scary Fourth Step and Fifth Step.

When I first got sober, the "chatter" started in my head. Here's just a partial list of the helpful pearls of wisdom dispensed by the nosey, itty, bitty committee between my ears: What am I going to do with all my free time now? Am I just going to be this boring God person who goes to meetings and spends time in libraries or quiet meditation? How am I going to have any fun without my best friend Smirnoff Vodka? And so on, and so on, and so on...

The funny thing with all my "concerns," they were all based on "what if" rather than "what is." The list of things I don't know about life would fill volumes of encyclopedias. Here's one thing I think I've learned, though: the vast majority – maybe all – of my fears and misgivings about recovery, and life in general, have centered either on morbid reflection or – even more frequently – fearful projection, or what I like to call "anticipatory dread". When I can just be where I am, all's right with me and the world. I have to constantly say to myself, "Be here now."

I remember when I was newly introduced to A.A. fresh from what I pray was my last drinking spree. I had assured my sponsor that I was willing to go to any length to get sober, and I thought I meant it. Still, I found myself dragging my feet with my Fourth Step. One day, we were talking about my fourth step. I told my sponsor that I was stuck because I was afraid of taking a look at the many ghosts in my closet from my sorted past drinking life.

My sponsor responded by telling me that I was not afraid of doing my Fourth Step, but I was afraid of doing the Fifth Step that usually follows. And not only that, but that I was also afraid of the last part of the Fifth Step. That step says, "Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs." He reminded me all I was doing in the fourth step is writing the inventory, nothing else. And before you tell another

human being in the Fifth Step, you first admit it to God and yourself. Finally he suggested I just concentrate on getting my Fourth Step down on paper. Then he told me to do the first two parts of the Fifth Step where I admit my wrongs to my Higher Power and to myself. Of course my sponsor was right and saw right through my excuses. By keeping my head where my feet were, on Step Four, I was able to finally to complete my fourth step. It was not an easy task. Writing my first Fourth Step was like pulling teeth with pliers and no Novocain, but I made it through the actual writing. Then my sponsor and I were able to move onto the fifth step without further scary feelings or delays.

This happened almost three and a half decades ago, yet this lesson stays with me to this day. When I keep my head where my feet are, recovery and life in general is not scary. Anticipatory dread is what the disease of alcoholism wants, but I want to live happy, joyous and free with my Higher Power and fellow AAs' help – Just For Today. ILS Antoinette B.



You know you've been in AA a few 24 hrs. when... You're leaving work at the end of the day and you tell your employer and co-workers "Keep coming back!" *Written By Kirstin and Gang*

Strength In Unity Of Action

"Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity." As the weekend unfolded, I witnessed the absolute astonishing strength of unity of Tradition One in action at the 36th Annual Canoe Camp-out Trip held by the Nomad Group. People came from all around Virginia, Maryland, and from other states as well. The bonfire meeting was held on Saturday night. There were 250 people at the bonfire meeting.

There was 150 campers and fun had by all. It's the most fun you will ever have with your clothes on. Friends and family all gathered and met that Friday. We held meeting, met old friends, and made new ones. We played in the water in and out of our boats. The Compton Rapids were as fast and as high as I had ever seen them. I was exciting flowing down the rapid waters in our inter-tubes. It rained a little but we still had lots of fun anyway.

Some were not tent experts as we were so when we finished pitching our tents we went around helping other A.A.s to get their tents up for the night. It warmed my heart to heard the older and young A.A.s sharing their experience, strength, and hope with each other around a flaring campfire. After the campfire meeting, many of us stayed around to get to know each other better. We laughed and talked all night long time. The smiling faces, the banding of children and the bonding of various recovering folks getting to know and understand each other better was a joy to behold.

I got a real kick out of noticing how happy and grateful some of the newcomers were that they could share and be a part of the Fellowship outside of the rooms. One newcomer in particular he had a wonderful story to share. I could see this spark in his eyes as he experienced a sense of belonging, enjoying nature, sitting around the campfire, safe without a care in the world. They seemed relieved of their stress, fear, and boredom. Some said they were beginning to understand how folks could stay sober and still have fun. Then there were the contented looks of

satisfaction of those who had so diligently worked to make this event happen. They were tired, busy, bombarded by multiple distractions putting their time and energy into something invaluable. And was it ever! They gave of themselves immensely and yet what I saw in their eyes was contentment and a peace of mind. They seemed to be rewarded by the happy, grateful, and smiling faces of those who needed to partake of what they had to offer. At the camp-out, the strength and power of unity of action that I was a part of that weekend was awesome. We gave of ourselves, our time, our money, our skills, our talent and our equipment in an expression of unconditional love, without any expectations. I look forward to seeing you all next year in this mighty show of our A.A. common welfare, strength, and unity of purpose. ILS, Brent S.

Dear Readers, Thanks for sharing your experience, strength, and hope regarding the July/August newsletter topic from **Mr. and Mrs. Porcupines**. They tried everything...couples therapy which ended with her leaping across the table and physically attacking him. They are deeply in love with each other. But they can't live with each other and they can't live without each other...

It was surprising to hear the negative responses concerning Mr. and Mrs. Porcupine's dilemma. Many of our readers said they tried the A.A. program and therapeutic help. These methods helped their marriage relationships to improve, while others decided to go their separate ways. However, one A.A. Oldtimer wrote that he could identify with the couples dilemma. His marriage started off rocky too. He had given his destructive ego, unfounded pride, and self-will authority to destroy their relationship. His sponsor suggested that he start living Tradition Two in his failing marriage. Tradition Two is concerned with protecting ourselves from ourselves. Trusting an ultimate loving and caring Authority to lead and care for us has healed my strong-willed, self-centered nature. They both have a voice in the decision making process today. More than forty years later they are still married and reasonably happy.

Finally, another A.A. member said she realized the need to break her bad habits (defects of character) that were destroying what could have otherwise been a happy marriage. Daily she started constantly reminding herself over and over again that "Service work begins at home." She said she used a measuring stick for her words and behavior. If she wouldn't do or say it to her sponsor or another A.A. member then she would choose not to behave or speak in such a manner to her soul-mate. The first day she tried it she felt the burning anger and resentment melting away in her heart. Her old habit of rage is disappearing.

Sincerely yours, Miss Gabby

Dear Miss Gabby,

I have been in my relationship for some time and suddenly I realize that we have significantly lost the passion we used to have for each other. I could feel signs developing over a long period of time. For instance sleeping. We use to sleep cuddling and spooning together. Today we sleep back to back or in separate rooms. I find myself sleeping on the couch when we haven't had a fight. We peacefully co-exist as two strangers who happen to be roommates. We use to take walks, long drives in the country, dancing, bowling, dinner out, plays, or sitting for hours watching movies together or talking. The thrill is gone and I feel stuck. I don't know how to get the passion back into our lives together. *Signed, Mr. STUCK*

Miss Gabby would love to hear your experience, strength, and hope for our November/December newsletter regarding the topic from **Mr. STUCK** at VAC District 30, P.O. Box 3202, Fredericksburg, VA 22402, or email friendofbillw82@gmail.com

23rd Mary W. 34 yrs. 12x12 Women Mtg
 23rd Jeff A. 17 yrs. Misfits
 26th Betty S. 24 yrs. Sober & Happy
 31st Nikki 5 yrs.
 31th Crystal Mike 28 yrs.

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

August

2nd George 41 yrs. Misfits
 4th Robin S. 10 yrs. Sober & Happy
 3rd Marie H. 18 yrs. Women Sunporch
 7th Margret P. 17 yrs. 10:30 VFW
 11th Kacey C. 5 yrs. Over the Hump
 15th Scot C. 12 yrs. Brooks Park
 28th Kathleen D. 7 yrs. 12x12 Women Mtg
 31st Kelly E. 4 yrs. Brooks Park

September

3rd Karen C. 36 yrs. 12x12 Women Mtg
 3rd Jay 4 yrs. Brooks Park
 4th Toolbox Joe 34 yrs. Misfits
 4th Susan C. 10 yrs. Over the Hump
 8th Liz B. 2 yrs. 12x12 Women Mtg
 8th Randy P. 18 mos. Brooks Park
 11th Kennedy 18 yrs. 10:30 VFW
 11th Danc Debbie 22 yrs. 10:30 VFW
 15th Sally 35 yrs. Saturday Fresh Start
 22nd Nicole H. 1 yr. Brooks Park
 23rd Debbie F. 10 yrs. Brooks Park

October

3rd Mike K. 10 yrs. Misfits
 5th Mustache Rick 31 yrs. Misfits
 6th Suzanne 34 yrs. Misfits
 7th Dick W. 33 yrs. Misfits
 10th Patty L. 28 yrs. 12x12 Women Mtg
 11th Daniel B. 2 yrs. Misfits
 13th Robin C. 43 yrs. 12x12 Women Mtg
 17th Steve J. 10 yrs. Misfits
 23rd Gordon 38 yrs. Hawaii

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

August 27th Old Timers BBO, at Jim Barnett Park – Rotary Shelter, Lunch 1:30 am, Speakers 1-2:30 pm. Bring a Newcomer and bring a dish to share.

September 5th Labor Day Breakfast, Early Bird Group, followed by an open discussion meeting.

September 17th Summer Picnic. 11:00-3:00 pm, at Vint Hill Village Green, Pavilion #1, 3235 Aiken Dr. Warrenton, VA 20187. RSVP faquierdistrict35@gmail.com

September 24th Virginia Area Corrections Workshop, "Carrying The Message Behind The Walls." From 9:00 am until 3:00 pm. Morning refreshments and BBQ Lunch, at Salem Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, 4044 Plank Road, Fredericksburg, VA 22407.

September 25th Woodbridge Fall Picnic from 11:00 – 4:00 pm at Leesylvania State Park, Fairfax Lading Shelter #2, 2001 Daniel Ludwig Dr, Woodbridge, VA. \$5.00 per car & bring a dish.

October 8th Manassas 2016 Fall Workshop, all are welcomed. From 8:00 – 2:00 pm, at Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church, 8712 Plantation Lance, Manassas, VA, 20110 across from Prince William Hospital behind TD Bank. Speakers and Pizza Lunch. Bring a side dish to dessert to share

October 14th – 16th Fall Assembly at Holiday Inn Virginia Beach—Norfolk, 5655 Greenwich Road, VA Beach, VA 23462, 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 M.

<p>I'm George, the Big Book says we had to fearlessly face that either God is everything or God is nothing. Either God is or God isn't.</p>  <p>Misfits Group </p>	<p>George, who was I to say there is no God? I tried to use my #@!* reason and logic. But I still couldn't stay sober.</p> 	<p>Cowboy, I stayed in total ignorance for years. I couldn't seem to open my #@!* ears and listen.</p> 	<p>Roger, many of us stayed drunk due to contempt prior to investigation too.</p> 
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