

Sober Times

March 2018

Telephone Lines – A Vital Link

I was recently tasked with honor of interviewing Leigh S, who serves at the Chair for District 38's telephone committee. She responded to several questions regarding the AA phones. Concerning why having an intergroup phone line is so important, and I quote, "This is about being of service to another alcoholic in many different ways. Assisting any person that calls and possibly helping the general public." As far as the phone itself, "The phone is comprised of two lines. There is a land line and a cell phone. The land line is mainly for the schedule of meetings and special events. The cell phone is so someone can talk to a person and get their questions answered." This is indeed an important committee and when asked how to get into service to keep the phone lines up and running: "The list to sign up to get the phone for home groups is passed around at the intergroup meeting, the second Wednesday of each month. Then, the members of each group get to volunteer weekly. Also, I am going to get the home groups more involved. Lastly my observations and committee members' observations: We each help out in our own way. I pass the phone to each group that has signed up. It helps me to know that the groups are willing to help out. I have gotten input on how to operate the phone. I want each person to use the phone as they think it is necessary. I would also like a little more help with the phone. I have only two other people on the committee. Also, more input from the groups would be greatly appreciated."

The phones are undoubtedly many AA's first foray into recovery and are vitally important. If you would like your home group to become more involved, please contact Leigh S or speak with your intergroup representative about signing your group up to be an important part of a suffering alcoholic's journey into the rooms.

FUN FACT:

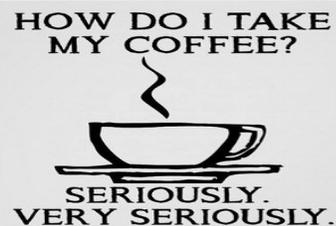
Alcohol increases
the size of the "send"
button by 89%

Young and Sober Group – Success!

I am ecstatic to report that young people in AA is thriving in Williamsburg. The Friday night meeting at the clubhouse has around 10 home group members and regularly numbers between 30-40 attendees. There is always overflow seating and occasionally there is only room to stand; even the back room is filled to capacity. This meeting has followed the path of YPAA meetings in Hampton, Virginia Beach, and Norfolk, to name a few. Williamsburg had a great need for a young people's meeting and a few people saw that need to fruition. Generally speaking, meetings take a while to build momentum; however, this meeting has had excellent attendance since its inception in early November. There was a slight decrease over the holidays, but it was no cause for alarm as, obviously AA members were out of town. If anyone is interested in attending this meeting, it is for young AA AND the young at heart; we certainly do not discriminate and all are welcome! The format is to have a speaker for 15 minutes, who shares on a topic derived from the Big Book and then open discussion (usually on said topic) for the remainder of the meeting. On the final Friday of the month there is an hour long speaker who shares their experience, strength, and hope. The meeting is held Fridays at 9:30 at the Triangle Stepping Stones Clubhouse.

Editor's note: Home Groups, meetings of all sizes and shapes, and committees are all encouraged to send in updates and reports on what is happening in your meeting! Share your experience, strength, and hope!

Whether your group has special or regularly scheduled events upcoming, you wish to ask for support, or you just want to spread the word to others, let us know!



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Meetings In Jail: Mike's Story

I spent some time in confinement before getting sober. AA meetings were carried in to the facility where I was, and I decided to pay it forward by getting involved in corrections work. I started by sending emails to the Williamsburg Intergroup website, asking how to get in service, which got no response. So I spoke up at a meeting about the lack of contact, and, as it happened, Gene M, then part of the treatment and corrections committee, was there. He convinced me to take on the commitment of co-chairmanship of the committee.

The work is both humbling and a reminder of where you can be if you're not living in the solution, jail for me was a result of untreated alcoholism. I know what its like to be on the other side of that wall.

I can say to guys in there, "Maybe this is your first time in jail, maybe this is your first AA meeting. I know where you're at, the hopelessness. I found the solution to that hopelessness in the fellowship of AA."

The work on the committee is sobering, but positive. It gets me out of myself, working for someone else's benefit. It is very much the basics, very simple.

Anyone wanting to work within the corrections environment needs to be fairly comfortable in their own sobriety, be somewhat experienced in sharing their story. Some people start just by coming to the jail meetings, and work up to being the person who shares their story. What is most important is the willingness to commit to being here on a regular basis. Also, being able to detach is important. You need to be personable without being personal. We want to see everyone who comes to the meetings in jail succeed, but some do not want to follow; we try to remember that we are working with people we sometimes can't be friends with.

We wish we could do more. They don't have access to a sponsor, and currently we have nobody doing one-on-one correspondence. We can't work closely with them the way we do with each other.

What we can do, is supply them with AA literature and Grapevines, and I read the Grapevine before going to the jail meetings, , as well as pamphlets, so that I can share with others what we have both read. I am also my home group's Grapevine chair , and that ties in to my service work within the Treatment and Corrections committee.

Meetings in Jail: Gene's Story

These people in jail love and respect us. They are blown away by the consistency of commitment of the people in AA in being there week after week, when we could be golfing, gardening, living our lives. Instead, we are there, and the rewards of that commitment are evident, for them as well as for us.

I am more comfortable there at a jail meeting than I am anywhere else. I can be absolutely, totally vulnerable in there; I can share anything. Some meetings outside, I feel constrained to share, but within the jail, I can talk directly to people, not in detail, but from the heart.

Most of what we are asked in jail meetings is simple, practical, and down to earth, but occasionally I get questions that are substantive and rich. I try to let them know I don't speak for AA, that I am sharing my experience. But I give advice on how to find a sponsor, advice on how to be an AA member in jail, stumbling blocks upon release, AA's approach to the disease of alcoholism.

Getting involved was as simple as being asked. There was a guy in my home group who said, "How would you like to carry a meeting into jail with me?" For me, its a way of paying my dues, of being responsible for carrying AA's message to the next person.

We've formed an active roster of committee members this year. Within the committee, we are working together to set a vision of where the service committee is supposed to go, and how we can deliver on that vision. We see our work in corrections as a three legged stool – being in service to people in jail through being there, written correspondence when we're not, and building a bridge to the outside for when they get back into society.

Ideally, we would like to recruit at least three people for every meeting we carry, as well as establish correspondence, and get people to do bridge work, committing to taking a newly released inmate to five meetings, to get them in the doors of AA.

It's really eye-opening. People tend to be nervous in the beginning, but others will help you. When you find yourself really communicating, all the other unease fades away. I feel uplifted, I feel completely safe in that environment. I can talk directly to people. And then I can translate that feeling into everyday experience when I am outside.

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Meetings in Jail: Other Voices – And Adding Yours

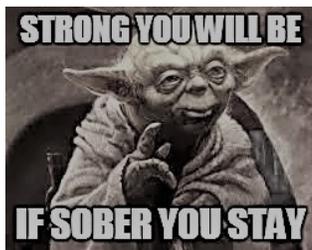
Kathy S. carries meetings to the women in Henrico East. "I've been involved in T&C almost as long as I've been sober. My sponsor said 'Get your clearance, you should come with me' so I did what I was told. In the beginning I was nervous but now, seventeen years later, its the highlight of the service I do. I encourage my sponsees to get involved and that too is working. Come on in, the water's great!"

Donna H. carries meetings into the Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail (VPRJ.) "I got involved by talking to someone who was already going. Once I had a year of sobriety under my belt I completed the VPRJ application and they called me a few weeks later to get my badge and have their orientation. By the grace of God, I go in there by choice. Being able to walk out after the meeting is contingent upon the maintenance of my spiritual condition."

Several other AA's are involved in carrying meetings into jails. Jimmy G. carries a men's meeting into VPRJ. Men from Gloucester in District 15 also carry meetings to Henrico East. Each of them have a message of hope that they carry not only to the jail, but also out of the jail, and into their personal lives and recoveries.

The service work of the committee is not just on an AA-to-inmate level. Whether it's being your home groups' treatment committee representative, whether its providing information and support for the Pink Can, whether its being a Grapevine representative and donating old grapevines for people to read in jail, just offering support for this important outreach, and making folks aware that this work is going on, is part of being in service to those who are currently incarcerated. These men and women are incarcerated, in many cases, because they suffer from the disease of alcoholism. We can offer a solution through the 12 steps.

Talk to your Home Groups' Intergroup Representative to find out how you can get involved and into service.



**Step 4 & 5
Workshop**

Saturday, March 17, 2018
4:00 – 6:00 PM

ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH
612 Jamestown Rd. Williamsburg

Hosted by Intergroup Special Events Committee

RECOVERY

A 50/50 Raffle will be held to help support future special events
Any questions regarding workshop please Email events@aawilliamsburg.org

Three AA logos at the bottom of the poster.

March 23-25: Serenity Weekend

8pm Friday to 11am Sunday
Speakers, Workshops, and More
Conference Registration \$25.00 by March 17
(this annual event sells out, register early)

Fort Magruder Hotel
6945 Pocahontas Trail Serenity Weekend
P.O. Box 832
Midlothian, VA 23113
www.serenityweekend.net

Contact Ross B. (804) 794-8099
Sammie G. (804) 247-0677
or Anne Marie L. (AFG) (757) 887-8194

Hotel reservations group rate by March 2
Dinner buffet reservations by March 2

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Mark Your Calendar: Upcoming Events

March 17:

Steps 4&5 Workshop
4pm to 6pm
St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
512 Jamestown Rd.

March 19:

Archives Committee service mtg
Grapevine Committee service mtg

May 5:

Telephone Committee service mtg

May 12:

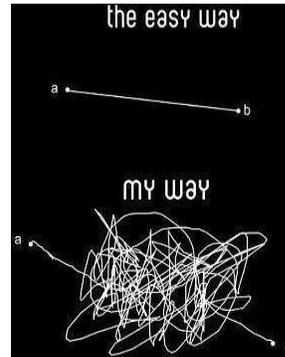
Take your Sponsor to Dinner
set-up service work around 3pm
Pot Luck Dinner and Speaker/Panel
around 6pm
King of Glory Lutheran Church
4897 Longhill Rd.

July 4th:

Annual Picnic – Food and Fun!
location TBA

July 14:

Delegate Report and Pot Luck
5pm to 7pm
St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
612 Jamestown Rd.



Sober Times is a publication made possible by the Williamsburg Area Intergroup in District 38. Opinions expressed are strictly those of the authors and do not reflect those of AA as a whole. Contributions, suggestions, and comments are welcomed.

So is help. Write to newsletter@aawilliamsburg.org

Intergroup meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month, 630PM at 4925 Centerville Rd. For more info go to www.aawilliamsburg.org or call (757) 253-1234

Spring

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JBMPTGRSACHNSHEWGGREEN
FOODMARCHNEWLEAVESUKGK
BUDDHASBIRTHDAYBOGGLESW

flowers bloom	birds return	green
April Fool	cherry blossom	Easter
March	bees	Buddha's Birthday
May	seed	spring break
plant crops	warm	lilac
bears awake	new leaves	picnic

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