

Sober Times

September 2017

Anonymous Opinion – Our Primary Purpose

What is AA's Primary Purpose? To stay sober. And? To help another alcoholic!

Funny how you can hear something so often you forget it.

At the Primary Purpose workshop, four alcoholics shared their experience on exactly this topic. Here is some of that experience.

Remember how scared you were the first time you came to a meeting? Not knowing anyone, not knowing what it was about. How did you feel when the AA member said 'Hello' and bid you welcome? That's primary purpose. The hand of AA. Freely given. Helping another is what keeps us sober.

What were you looking for when you came to that first meeting? To get your job or your wife back? To fix 'that awful jam'? When did you come to accept this primary purpose?

And how does this fit into sponsoring? What does it mean to 'Help'? Should we call the newcomer?

Some say never. Chasing the new prospect puts the word 'cult' in AA. One suggestion - call only once, after three days, and leave it at that. For some, having a member show up at their door to take them to a meeting was just what they needed.

What about the "God" word? Is this part of the primary purpose? The book says to be slow to bring it up to the new prospect. But it's also true, that "Leaving the spiritual out of AA is like leaving the wet out of the ocean". Working the steps together will help here.

What about Primary Purpose when sharing at meetings? Almost every topic has a basis in sobriety, but it's easy to get off topic. One share on the death one's pet; the next on animal cruelty, and the next on a cute dog video will leave us asking "what am I doing here"? The chair has an important function: to guide us back to our primary purpose.

How about drugs, prescribed and not? There is excellent literature on this topic. And we can always talk to our sponsor or another experienced member.

Primary means first.

First things first, one day at a time...

Staying sober, helping another alcoholic.

Young and Sober VSCYPAA Members Meet

The next VSCYPAA business meeting will be held in Williamsburg on October 15. Time and location will be announced by flier shortly.

The Virginia State Conference of Young People in AA held its monthly business meeting in Virginia Beach on Sunday the 10th of September.

The meeting included the completion of chairperson elections for 2018. The positions voted on were; graphic designer, hospitality, literature, special needs, archivist, diversity, and events planning.

After the job duties and responsibilities for each position were read, the group voted for new chair holders. Although only a certain number of chair positions exist, there were plenty of roles for those without an official chair position.

The ultimate goal is for everyone to participate in the planning of the conference and future events.

The city of Virginia Beach will be hosting the VSCYPAA conference in 2018. The location of the conference is currently being discussed. There are currently four hotels that could potentially host the meeting at the oceanfront.

Many of the newly elected chair holders will be working in concert with each other to ensure the conference is fully prepared.

The slogan for the conference will be "Step Ashore". This is in reference to the passage in *We Agnostics* from the Big Book, and Virginia Beach's proximity to the oceanfront.

The graphics design chairman will work on a banner and flier specifically for the upcoming conference.

A motion was passed for a fall festival event to be held in Gloucester on October 28th from 11am to 5pm. The set-up will begin at 9am and volunteers are encouraged to participate.

The event will include a 5 mile walk/run with activity at each mile marker. The event will also include bobbing for apples, door donations, a ticket raffle drawing, AA trivia, costume contest, and speaker meeting.

All are welcome to join in the fun.

Remember, you are young if you say you are!

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Primary Purpose Workshop a Huge Success

On Saturday, September 10, Williamsburg Area Intergroup held a workshop on AA's Primary Purpose. It was attended by about 50 people, filling the meeting room at 612 Jamestown Rd. The format of the workshop was a panel presentation, followed by an 'ask it basket' question and answer period. Coffee, tea, cookies, and snacks were served to the crowd, and a 50/50 raffle capped off the gathering.

The panel was introduced to the enthusiastic audience at 4pm by Raquel A, Special Events Chair for Intergroup. The panel consisted of four speakers, Sherry C, Sheree S, Doug G, and Chris H, all members of the local AA community, and familiar to the attendees. AA's Fifth Tradition states, "Each group has but one primary purpose, to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers." In addition, AA publishes primary purpose statement 'blue' cards for open and closed meetings. Each panel member was given about 20 minutes to speak on their experience with AA's Primary Purpose, both as AA members, and as individuals trying to stay sober.

Sherry C, who spoke first, emphasized how AA's primary purpose helped her identify with others who suffered from alcoholism, and how she was then able to work with others by focusing on that single purpose, first with a sponsor, and then in turn with others who feel the same way as she once did. She also stated that focusing on AA's primary purpose has given her life new significance and direction, and quoted parts of the Big Book explaining how, by working with others, life will take on new meaning.

Chris H, who was next, spoke on the aspect of Primary Purpose which constrains how we, as AA members and as potential sponsors of newcomers to AA, can and cannot help others. He read parts of the pamphlet, "Problems Other Than Alcohol," which explains that, through AA's Primary Purpose, we as representatives of the AA message can reach out to people who suffer from addictions to other substances, and those who suffer from other afflictions such as mental disease. But, anyone we attempt to help must also be able to identify as alcoholic, in order for our message to be effective. In order ensure that AA remains 'alive' for future generations, we cannot be all things to all people.

A break was called, and complimentary refreshments and snacks were served to the attendees. Funds for the food and drink were obtained from Intergroup coffers, and tickets to the fund-raising 50/50 raffle were sold by David L. to raise money for the next workshop, and other Intergroup events.

Following the break, Sheree S. spoke of how AA's Primary Purpose gave her something to offer others. Being part of a fellowship, united in common cause with many others, allowed her to move from the AA 'sidelines' and become part of the 'center' of AA, where her own personal recovery strengthened. The opportunity to give back to those in need, always a part of her beliefs, was made possible by recognizing the responsibility that the Primary Purpose implies, a call to action that compelled her to reach out to others, in order to stay sober herself. Her own personal history provided a caution that it is possible to be in AA meetings, and even consider yourself an AA member, without ever realizing what you are part of.

Doug G. shared on how AA's Primary Purpose helps AA meetings stay 'on topic.' He read from the Primary Purpose 'blue' card for both open and closed meetings which asks that all participants in AA meetings, "confine their discussion to their problems with alcohol." He explained that, while people may share about subjects such as loss, fear, resentment, and loneliness, these problems should be discussed in the context of how it affects us as sufferers of the disease of alcoholism. We all have a responsibility to ensure that AA meetings do not stray into simple commiseration over a life problem, or advice to others on topics unrelated to alcohol.

During the panel presentation, audience members were encouraged to submit any questions by writing them onto cards, and placing them in the 'ask it basket' on each table, so that the panel could read and answer these questions at the conclusion. The cards were brought to the panel after the sharing was complete. Each card submitted was read, answers to the questions were solicited from the panel, and audience participants were asked to contribute comments.

The winner of the raffle was drawn, and announcements of upcoming events were made. Intergroup plans to have quarterly workshops in 2018, focusing on the 12 steps, with dates to be announced. Intergroup will also host:

Gratitude Dinner on November 13 at the Williamsburg United Methodist Church at 500 Jamestown Road.

Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Years Day_ alcohons, held at the Wesley Foundation building next door to the Williamsburg Methodist Church.

Fliers for these upcoming events will be published soon, as well as posted on website aawilliamsburg.org. Many thanks to those in service who made this workshop possible!

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A Backward Glance: District 38 History

The first AA meeting in Williamsburg occurred in early 1952, in a church, now demolished, that stood at the corner of Duke of Gloucester and Boundary Streets, where Merchant's Square is now located. By July 1952, Williamsburg's first group, Original Williamsburg Group, was formed.

All Williamsburg groups were originally part of District 12, Newport News, Area 71, Virginia. Over the next forty-two years the presence of AA slowly expanded in Williamsburg and the surrounding counties. By 1994 there were thirteen listed groups and approximately 23 meetings. Gail L served as LCM for District 12.

At that point Williamsburg had enough groups, local AAs with service experience, and meetings that financially supported the AA service structure, to support redistricting. With the assistance of Michaelene F, VAC chair, and following a unanimous vote of the groups in the Williamsburg area, District 38 was formed in May of 1994 and held its first District meeting in June 1994. Gail L served as the first DCM. The name "Historic Virginia" was selected in July and District 38 was formally recognized at the VAC fall 1994 assembly.

The first District workshop was held in September 1994. In December 1994, District began to hold the Candlelight Gratitude Dinner. District held the first Fourth of July picnic in 1996. It also sponsored the Thanksgiving and Christmas Day alcahons in 1996 and the first New Years Day alcahion in 1997. In March of 1998 it hosted the VAC Spring Assembly.

In those early years, District 38 continued to support the Peninsula Intergroup and its phone service in its office in Newport news, until the Williamsburg Area Intergroup was formed in 1999.

With its formation, special events and many service committees transferred to the Williamsburg Area Intergroup. By 2004 the respective of the two service boards largely reflected their 2017 structure.

In 2000, Historic Virginia hosted the VAC Spring Assembly. Most recently Historic Virginia hosted 2014 VAC State Convention and the 2017 Winter Meeting. District 38 has a legacy of local and area service, and members of District 38 have served as VAC committee chairperson, VAC chair, and Area 71 delegate.

Movie Night To Be Hosted By District 38

On Thursday, November 16, District 38 will host a Movie Night from 7:30 to 9:00 pm at the Williamsburg Baptist Church, 227 Richmond Rd.

District 38 has on hand several of the Audiovisual DVD's published by the General Service Office. These videos are both educational, and a valuable resource for people who wish to discover more about AA principles in action, AA history, and experiences of members of the AA fellowship.

Decisions on which videos to show on the first movie night will be made soon, and published in a forthcoming flier. Following the presentation, a panel of AA's will be on hand to share their experience, strength, and hope on the subject matter, and to facilitate discussion and questions about the audiovisual presentation.

Movies District 38 currently has available include:

Young People's Videos: a collection of experiences of people who got sober in their teens and twenties.

Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous: Explanations of AA's primary purpose and principles, including sponsorship and basic recovery tools.

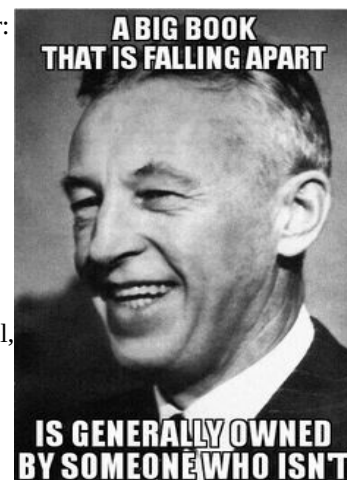
Markings on the Journey: AA history using rare footage from AA archives

Bill's Own Story: AA Co-founder Bill W. tells his story in his own words.

A New Freedom: Filmed inside correctional facilities, AA members staying sober while incarcerated.

Commented an AA member: "I hope to enrich my understanding of recovery through the movie presentation, and discover what other people outside my circle of meetings are doing. No matter what we end up watching, I look forward to seeing what's in the General Service material, and hearing the experiences of local members in putting these ideas into action."

Join us at the movies, and enjoy learning more about what AA is all about!



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Positive Attitude Word Search

Y V S O P Q E E Z W C M H I Y
L N E E M R D J I T G O I E O
P J O Y L U O L C Z R D G V U
P A K M T F L G X M Y E H I R
U P M I R P D Q R F Z E E T S
R Z T L O A E I H E B R N I E
E T O W I O H V S B S F E S L
A V E L K C J W I C B S R O F
E R N O I T A V I T O M G P S
P O W E R F U L P J P V Y S A
X L J Z K G C K N E T E E G F
Y T I L A U Q P M O A C C R I
L M A T X X P Q O O C C F E Y
V I C T O R Y K T U X S E N R
W I I H X M K W S D B C R E S

ATTITUDE
HARMONY
LOVE
PEACE
POWERFUL
PURE
RECEPTIVE
SUCCESS
WILL-POWER

FREEDOM
HIGH-ENERGY
MOTIVATION
POSITIVE
PROGRESS
QUALITY
SELF-DISCOVERY
VICTORY
YOURSELF



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



Save The Dates!

Gratitude Dinner

Monday, November 13 at the Williamsburg United Methodist Church at 500 Jamestown Road. A pot-luck buffet dinner where friends and family are all invited.

Thanksgiving Day

Thursday, November 23, Alcothon from 8am to 8pm. Wesley Foundation at 526 Jamestown Road. Meetings on the even hours, food and fellowship.

Christmas Day

Monday, December 25, Alcothon from 8am to 8pm. Wesley Foundation at 526 Jamestown Road. Meetings on the even hours, food and fellowship.

New Years Day

Monday, January 1, 2018, Alcothon from 8am to 8pm. Wesley Foundation at 526 Jamestown Road. Meetings on the even hours, food and fellowship.

