

# BEHIND THE WALLS IN VERMONT

AREA 70 CORRECTIONS COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER  
February 2009



## MORE PAYDAY.....

"We promised the fellows an anniversary celebration at next week's meeting, as my fellow A.A. volunteer had just celebrated 19 years of sobriety. So the next Sunday we brought in a cake. At the coffee break midway thru the meeting, I gave my fellow volunteer the cake. I repeated some of the things her sponsor said the previous week. She accepted the cake and said 'We stand up for the cake at my home group' meaning the recipient. However, all the A.A. inmates stood up when hearing that. We had a good laugh, as we explained only the celebrant stands. We were touched by the display of courtesy and affection the fellows displayed. The chocolate cake was good, too!" *Marble Valley Volunteers*

*"The Area 70 Archives Committee spent their time before the December Full Area Assembly "banging" on their tables. We couldn't figure out what they were up to. Later they reported they pulled the staples from Grapevines, and were banging the pages back together. The committee then presented these Grapevines to the Corrections Committee. We reluctantly informed them that stapled Grapevines were permitted in the Vermont prison system. We had a good laugh and thanked them for their efforts." The Corrections Committee.*

"At our regular 12 Step jail meeting, an A.A. behind the walls asked 'How do you know when you've hit bottom?' The question really grabbed everyone's attention. Others agreed it was a great topic, centering around Step One and the powerlessness over our alcoholism and the unmanageability it brought to our lives. I've brought it into some of our meetings on the outside, and the topic had the same result – members sharing their Step One experience." *A 12 Stepper in Jails*

"A few months ago we wrote about an A.A. behind the walls who was a perfect candidate for the Prerelease Contact Program, except he was getting out in a few days. We worked very hard getting him hooked up with an outside member from his hometown and were excited about his prospects for staying sober on the outside. But the outside A.A. later told us it never panned out, they never met.. Then about two months later, the A.A. contact received a call from the former inmate. They eventually met, and have been attending meetings together. A lesson we all learned from this experience is to never give up on the process, or the alcoholic." *A Prerelease Contact*

*"We've been going into jails for awhile now, and understand Super Bowl Sunday night could mean an attendance shutout for our meeting. The Corrections Officer also warned us they were being served subs and snacks for the game, and 'don't be too disappointed if no one shows.' Two fellows stopped by to thank us for showing up, but quickly left. Sure enough, 15 minutes into the starting time saw no A.A. enter the meeting room. We were ready to repack the literature when a couple of fellows came in, then a few more, and eventually we had about 7 or 8 of us around the table. As always, we had a great meeting, and some of the guys even seemed more willing to share in a more intimate setting. I laugh at myself for my 'expectations.' I normally learn these lessons at my home group, but am also supposed to be teachable at any A.A. meeting I attend. We arrived home at 9:00 p.m., and I pulled the tape out watched the game from the beginning." A Steelers Fan*

"At the end of every outside meeting, I put a plug in for literature for the A.A.s in our local prison. This particular Saturday morning group already had a jailbox. Someone else announced his home group was in trouble, and needed some support. So my wife and I gave up our Saturday night movie date and went to support the meeting with our attendance and a few more bucks in the basket. At the end, I announced the inmates could use more literature in the prison. A gent in front of me turned and said he heard about a fellow looking for literature for the jails. We walked with him to his car after the meeting, and sure enough, he handed us a plastic bag with about twenty Grapevines, pamphlets, and hard covered literature, too. This is just another way to support A.A. behind the walls, even if you don't carry the message personally." *The Announcer*

*Do you have a "Payday" story you'd like to share? Please contact your district or area corrections chair.*

**ROTATION:** *When corresponding with professionals, the corrections chair has started using 2009 in his "signature," to reinforce the understanding that there will be a new chair in 2010. Which brings up this question: are there any A.A. corrections volunteers or other A.A.s, who might want to make themselves available in the Fall for the Area 70 Corrections Chair position? The newly elected Area Chair will be appointing new area committee chairs in October, November, and December.*

**The Vermont Northwest Correctional Facility** in St Albans is now a women's facility. Interested A.A.s who already carry a Wednesday night meeting into the jail, and new women volunteers met Feb 4. The head of the Department of Family and Youth Services, and the head of Addictive and Substance Abuse Services asked that a new meeting be brought in by women only. It will start at 6:30 Thursday evening. Both women and men can attend the ongoing Wednesday night meeting. Kelly Mangan, the Volunteer Coordinator at Northwest, praised the current male volunteers for their past commitment, and along with new women volunteers, expects the Wednesday night meeting to continue to thrive. Dawn F., our current Meeting List Chair, has assumed the role of A.A. sponsor for the new Thursday meeting, but needs sober women from Districts 1, 2, and 11 to help with this commitment. Her email address is: [a70meetinglist@att.net](mailto:a70meetinglist@att.net). Or contact your DCM who can put you in contact with her.

## **ORIENTATION IN VERMONT CORRECTIONS FACILITIES**

After the above meeting, the new A.A. volunteers and other community members/volunteers received an orientation regarding the new procedures throughout the Vermont Correctional Facilities. The new directives were thoroughly explained, and are intended to protect and benefit both the inmates and volunteers. Our meetings in the jails will be more effective when abiding by their rules. As volunteers in these facilities, it is important to understand that we are the guests of the Department of Corrections. If our Traditions are compromised, simple communication normally alleviates any concerns or problems. We encourage new volunteers to step up to carrying the message behind the walls.

***Universal Clearance?*** *Not quite. But close! If cleared to go into your local prison, you can attend meetings in any Vermont Corrections Facility. All that is necessary is a phone call to your local Volunteer Coordinator, and ask them to send some simple info to the facility you wish to attend. About a week notification is necessary, and voila! You're in. The Vermont Department of Corrections is making this extremely easy for our volunteers. Thank you.*

**SPRING CORRECTIONS WORKSHOP:** Which district in Northern Vermont will host our event? Past workshops have brought A.A. members and professionals together to discuss how A.A. can be most effective behind the walls. Presentations by members on the Prerelease Contact Program, the Correspondence Service, Jailboxes and Jailcans, etc. have opened new avenues for A.A.s on the inside and outside continue to stay sober. Our committee welcomes suggestions and new topics. Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, and 11 are all asked to support this workshop. However, one district must step forward to host this event. The Corrections Committee is responsible for financing the workshop.

**Inmate to Inmate** is a soft cover book written by inmates for inmates. Our committee recently purchased 100 books for...nothing! World Services only charged us for the shipping cost. That is where your two dollars in the basket goes. If any district or individuals want a supply of Inmate to Inmate, please contribute \$.30 each to cover the shipping costs. The only better deal around is the contribution of A.A. literature or monetary contributions in the Jailboxes and Jailcans. Money in the Jailcans will only be used for literature. And the literature you provide may be the only meeting in print an A.A. behind the walls may have all week.

**Area 70 Website:** check out our [aavt.org](http://aavt.org) website in the next few weeks for our Corrections page. We'd appreciate your suggestions and feedback.

*"We need help...your articles, experiences, and participation." For a copy or pdf of this newsletter, past issues, and Committee Reports, please call, mail or email the Corrections Chair, PO Box 32, Bomoseen, VT 05732  
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