

Who is AHH?

The mission of the Alderson Hospitality House is to provide support for those incarcerated at the Alderson Federal Prison Camp, their families and friends by providing temporary lodging, meals, transportation, emotional support and education.

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FLIGHT INFORMATION



Raleigh County Memorial

Beckley, WV
www.flybeckley.com
Greenbrier Valley
Lewisburg, WV
www.gvairport.com

AMTRAK INFORMATION



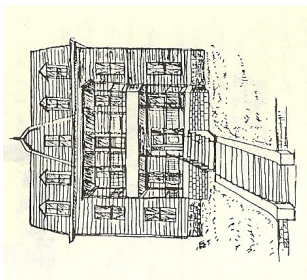
www.amtrak.com

Amtrak stops in Alderson, WV
ONLY Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
From Chicago, eastbound: Train #50
From New York, westbound: Train #51

Non-Profit Org.
Permit No. 579
Alderson, WV
24910

If you would like to be added or removed, please contact us!

Alderson Hospitality House
203 High Street
PO Box 579
Alderson, WV 24910
304.445.2980



www.aldersonhospitalityhouse.org
aldersonhospitalityhouse@gmail.com

ALDERSON HOSPITALITY HOUSE



VOLUME 39, ISSUE 3

FALL 2016

NORMAL FEELS DIFFERENT By BRIAN

The evening of June 23rd was a normal one at our little house just down the steps and around the corner from the Hospitality House. We had brought down the newsletters and were settling in, listening to music and getting ready to fold them so that they could go out in the mail. It had been raining throughout the day, but rain is as familiar around here as fireflies during the hot summer months. Living in the flood plain, we are wary whenever winter comes around as more Januarys than not the Greenbrier River likes to escape its banks. In June, however, this was not a concern...at least it wasn't at 5pm on the 23rd. By 7pm, we were paying attention but not worried as the river gauges that measure and predict the water levels said we would be okay.

That all changed at 10pm when it was announced that there had been a problem with those flood gauges and that a lot of water was barreling down river; 5 minutes later

the power went out.

By the next morning, our world was anything but normal. Several feet of water had filled our home, the Hospitality House park was almost totally submerged, and we were hearing horror stories of the destruction only 20 minutes up river.



Natural disasters are things that usually happen in other places to other people. We are all accustomed to seeing the damage from earthquakes, tornados, and floods on the news. How surreal it was, though, to find our little boy's stuffed animal 200 yards downstream and covered in mud!

Parenting can be a scary job in today's world, as we know that there are threats out there. But the most frightened our sons have ever been was while they were in our arms, in the middle of our living room, that steamy June evening when we told them they had 2 minutes to pick their favorite toy to take with them as we sent them up to higher ground.

Of course, their fear in this instance was not really about toys. We tried to smile and

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HOUSE NOTES

By KATHLEEN

As I sit here typing, I can hear the crowd in the living room cheering for their favorite football teams: Tennessee vs. A&M. We have fans on both sides shouting, grunting and debating in reaction to the plays. This is why I love that we don't have televisions in the 13 Hospitality House guest rooms. The guests really build community around cheering on their favorite sport team or watching their favorite show together. Conversations start with the show or game and oftentimes grow to much deeper talk as the night moves on.

As the adults cheer and chat in the living room, I can hear the kids in the playroom laughing and carrying on in the background. Ten kids are watching TV, building with the blocks, and having pillow fights. It's just a typical night here at the house, and they have been very common these past few months.

I'm grateful for these typical evenings with 30 something guests filling the house with life, laughter, tears, excitement, and fears after so many atypical events as a re-

sult of the flood. For those of you that don't know, right as we were about to send out the last newsletter, WV experienced a 1,000 year flood. Luckily due to its position on high ground, when the flood receded we were immediately able to welcome our guests back, and since then, we've had many days and nights full of guests, kids and adults, filling the house with life.

This summer the House invested in a new outdoor grill, and we have put the grill to frequent use. The guests love when we grill out, and I try to make a

point to do it at least during every summer holiday. Hamburgers and hot dogs from the grill seem like a must for the 4th of

July and Labor Day celebrations. We usually receive help from guests in the kitchen, and grill outs are no exception. I'm not a grill expert, and so I put the word out around the house that I'm looking for someone who enjoys flipping a burger. It is rare when I don't quickly find a willing (usually male) guest ready to step up to the task.

Speaking of the grill, one Friday in July, the power went out two hours before dinner. Other than not being able to see very well, I thought that I could still manage to make some pasta and sauce. The stove has gas burners, and as long as I have a lighter, I can make it work. The problem is that the oven is electric, and I had already made dough for breadsticks, which had risen nicely. I didn't want to waste all the dough, and people were expecting homemade bread-

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VOTING CONTINUED

was reversed in 2011. Now there is a mandatory 5-year waiting period before voting rights can be restored. Similarly, in Iowa, the Governor, by executive order, restored voting rights for all who had completed their sentences, but in 2011 a subsequent Governor rescinded that order.

The groundwork for felon disenfranchisement is older than our nation itself. According to The Sentencing Project, "English colonists brought to North America the common law practice of 'civil death,' a set of criminal penalties that included the revocation of voting rights. Early colonial laws limited the penalty of disenfranchisement to certain offenses related to voting or 'egregious violations of the moral code.'" The Civil War led many states to institute felony disenfranchisement policies and by 1869, 29 states had them in place. Even back then, these policies "served as an alternate means for wealthy elites to constrict the political power of the lower classes."

While voter felon disenfranchisement laws apply regardless of race, they affect people of color disproportionately. Nationwide, 1 in 13 African Americans are denied the right to vote due to felony convictions and in the states of Florida, Kentucky

and Virginia that ratio rises to 1 in 5.

Now many people ask why felony disenfranchisement even matters in a nation where the majority of Americans don't bother to vote anyway? The answer to this question, for me, is simple. Most Americans are not aware of the systemic problems plaguing our criminal justice system. Most Americans do not know or care what mandatory minimum sentences or for profit prisons are. Until people come face to face with the prison industrial complex due to their own incarceration or that of a loved one, these issues simply do not matter.

Whether a person and his or her family are enduring a prison sentence of 4 months or 40 years, the experience changes them. For some who have the privilege of being previously unaware, it is eye opening; while for others, it is a personal experience familiar to far too many of their friends and neighbors. Whatever the case, those who have been incarcerated and their families know that many changes need to be made. Like it or not, those changes can only be made by our elected officials. Each and every one of us who does care about our incarcerated sisters and brothers, and want to see the system change, must vote. 🗳️

HOUSE NOTES CONTINUED

sticks, so I put our new grill to the test. I actually grilled breadsticks, and they tasted awesome!

The nights are starting to get chilly, and the trees are changing colors. Fall is here! I'm looking forward to soup for dinner and getting warm in front of the fire, but I think I'll need to break out the grill at least one more time before autumn turns to winter and cool nights become frigid. But even then, inside the House will be the warmth felt when people feel at home. 🏠



POETRY

CORNER

Maya Angelou

Graduating into single motherhood,
 life's possibilities must have seemed dismal.
 Though known for words,
 actions placed you among great and terrible personalities.
 What curse accompanied you from Ghana;
 how could Malcolm X have guessed?



What celebration on your 40th,
 that 4th day of April,
 could commend a fallen friend?
 What a weight to carry:
 the burden of a lifetime!
 Still greatness followed you,
 Stalked you perhaps is more accurate.

Native Son embraced native daughter
 Whose caged bird sang of freedom.
 You translate tragedy into triumph,
 resurrect hope from hatred,
 like tears from a phoenix,
 instilling new life into a dying civilization.
 Pray God it's not too late.

By: Dan Gladich

From a collection of poems inspired by
 the women whose names adorn the
 rooms of the Alderson Hospitality House.

Please share your artwork, thoughts and words of anguish, hope and joy. We'll consider any submissions for future publications, so please send us your stuff! 🌍

NORMAL CONTINUED

joke some as we hurried
 them out of
 our home, but children are per-
 ceptive creatures; they could see
 the fear in our faces and hear it
 in our voices. To kids of their
 age, mommy and daddy know
 everything, and at that moment,
 it was clear to all of us that we
 did not know what was going to
 happen.

Our home will have to be de-
 molished as the damage is be-
 yond repair, but it is still stand-



ing and thanks to the topography of the
 flood plain in Alderson, our lives were
 never in danger. That was not the
 case for many in our area that night.
 Sixteen people lost their lives in
 Greenbrier County alone and while
 the National Guard is long gone and
 the destroyed piles of belongings have
 been removed from the streets, nor-
 mal feels different than it did before.
 It likely will for quite some time. 🌍

VOTING RIGHTS

By BRIAN

This has been an election season
 that many Americans, including my-
 self, would like to forget. Flawed can-
 didates, total loss of civility and very
 little in the way of concrete policies
 which we as the electorate can use to
 make informed choices are only a few
 of the problems. While this situation is a sad
 one, I do not believe that we the people are
 without blame. According to the Pew Re-
 search Center, 28.5% of eligible voters
 showed up to do their duty during the pri-
 mary elections (and that was almost a record
 high, in 2012 it was 16%.) In the 2012 presi-
 dential election 53.6% of eligible American's
 voted and the last time voter turnout was
 over 50% in a mid-term election was 1908.
 While arguments to the contrary are ubiqui-
 tous, it is hard to make the argument that
 politicians are the problem when we the peo-
 ple don't show up to vote.

Among the many things that make our
 nation a great one are the rights that we are
 entitled to as citizens. While we talk about
 them, sing about them, and often cite them
 when feeling superior as a nation, we also, to
 a great extent, take them for granted. This is
 one of the differences between those who
 have traveled or are traveling the journey



through in-
 carceration
 and those
 who have
 not; once
 rights have
 been taken
 away, it is
 easier to
 recognize

just how precious they are. While the major-
 ity of us who are able to vote take that right
 for granted, millions of Americans who have
 a felony on their record can not.

Due to felony disenfranchisement laws,
 almost 6 million Americans have had their
 right to vote taken away. Maine and Ver-
 mont are the two exceptions, as within their
 borders the voting rights for felons (even
 those currently incarcerated) are not re-
 stricted. On the other end of the spectrum,
 there are twelve states in which those con-
 victed of a felony lose their right to vote for
 years, if not permanently.

Laws and practices regarding voting
 rights restoration vary from state to state
 and often vacillate according to the ever-
 changing political climate. For example, in
 2007, Florida's clemency board voted to
 automatically restore voting rights to most
 non-violent offenders; however, that decision

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RECIPES FROM THE KITCHEN

Banana Muffins

2 cups all purpose flour

1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 cup sugar

1/3 cup canola oil

4 ripe bananas, mashed

1/4 cup water

1 teaspoon vanilla

1 cup mini semisweet chocolate chips

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
2. Combine the flour, baking soda, and salt together and set aside
3. Combine the sugar and oil together
4. Mash the bananas and add to the sugar and oil mixture
5. Add the water and vanilla into the sugar, oil, and banana mixture and beat thoroughly
6. Add in the flour mixture and combine until well mixed. Try not to overmix
7. Add in the chocolate chips.
8. Drop batter into greased muffin tins, filling them just over half full.
9. Bake for 20-30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

This recipe can be easily used for banana bread, the baking time will simply need to be increased by 10 minutes or so. Using dairy free chocolate chips makes this recipe 100% vegan friendly!!! 🌱

NEW HOUSE UPDATE

Our new home will soon be on its way! Three months ago we could not have imagined saying those words, but today it is a reality. When the flood waters destroyed our little house we knew that there was not chance that those waters would chase our family away from this amazing place, but despite that conviction we really did not know how it would all work out.

The Catholic Diocese opened what used to be Saint Mary of the Greenbrier Catholic Church as a short term solution to our little family of flood refugees. We gratefully moved in, but many questions remained...What was our long term housing solution, where would the money come from, how long



would it take before we could settle back into life as we know and love it?

We still don't have all the details, but thanks to all of you, friends and family from near and far, the answer is that we will soon be living in a beautiful new modular home up on the Hospitality House property far above the flood plain. We set a goal of raising \$150,000 for the building of a new home and other flood related costs. Thus far we have raised \$111,708.73 towards our flood recovery and still have several significant pledges representing over \$10,000 that will arrive in the near future. We still have a sizeable amount of money left to raise, but getting this far in this amount of time feels like nothing short of a miracle! 🌱

THE ANNUAL FUND

Believe it or not, we did not include the need to raise \$150,000 for a new home in our 2016 AHH budget, but it looks like we will be doing just that! While our eyes are turned to a hopeful future, we also must focus on the present, and as normal, when it comes to Hospitality House finances, things remain tenuous.

The amount of money coming in for our general house operating expenses has declined sharply in the months since the flood. While we are deeply grateful that we will soon have a new home, the electric bill still needs to be paid and groceries need to be

purchased. Due to the flood we have had to cancel our Haunted House fundraiser and with 3 months remaining in the year, we need to raise close to \$36,000 in order to meet our normal budgeted House expenses. Please consider the everyday miracles that this place is able to provide in the lives of our guests which is only made possible with your continued financial support. 🌱

Please make all checks payable to **Alderson Hospitality House** or donate online at www.aldersonhospitalityhouse.org
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

WISH LIST

Everyday Items

Coffee
Postage Stamps
Ink Pens
Dish Soap
Dryer Sheets
Toilet Paper
Hand Soap Refills
Light Bulbs
Fresh Produce
Pasta
Pasta Sauce
Lemonade/Iced Tea Mix
Kroger/IGA/Kmart Gift Cards

Willing to spend a bit more?

Extra Long Table Clothes
Bath Towels to match the rooms
Rain Barrel
Dehydrator
Wooden Cutting Boards (3)

For the big spenders out there:

New or gently used living room recliners
Economy Car and/or Minivan

