

Who is AHH?

The Alderson Hospitality House supports the women of the Federal Prison Camp Alderson and their families and friends. We believe in the importance of visitors during incarceration. Our volunteers and staff, through donations, demonstrate this belief by providing temporary lodging, meals, transportation assistance, information and support.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael Vincent	Nancy Plummer
Linda Dameron	Tina Marquart
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AHH STAFF

Ashley Boone
Kathleen DeRouen, co-director
Brian DeRouen, co-director

FLIGHT INFORMATION



Raleigh County Memorial

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

AMTRAK INFORMATION

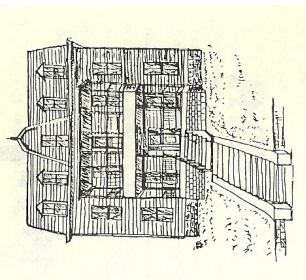


www.amtrak.com
Amtrak stops in Alderson, WV
ONLY Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
From Chicago, eastbound: Train #50
From New York, westbound: Train #51

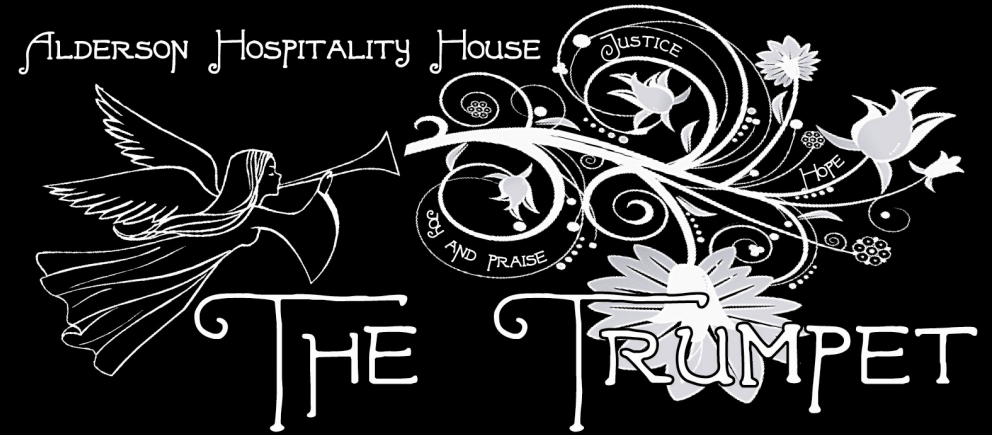
Non-Profit Org.
Permit No. 579
Alderson, WV
24910

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

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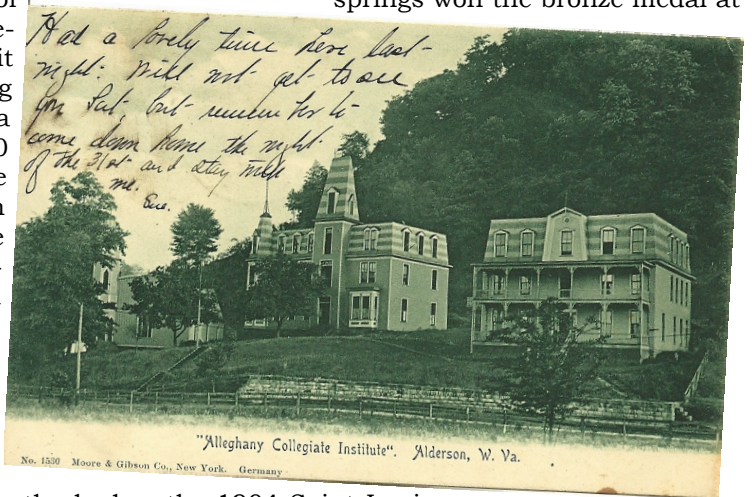
FOR THE LOVE OF ALDERSON

By Ashley

At the turn of the 19th century the Alderson Hospitality House was living its first life as the girl's dormitory for the Allegheny Collegiate Institute and despite the years which have passed, the pictures we have of the house from the 1890's look remarkably similar to the house at it stands today. While the building has remained the same, the area around her was quite different 100 years ago. In those days, people ventured to the Greenbrier Valley in droves to wash in and sip from the variety of natural, therapeutic sulfur springs making the area a popular vacation destination.

Investors capitalizing on the budding tourism industry built luxury resorts. They aimed to bring guests the comforts of the big city while allowing them the thrill of vitality brought by spending time in the lush mountain state. The Greenbrier, located in White Sulphur Springs, about 45 minutes from Alderson, remains the most notable of these stately white columned resorts. It isn't, however, the only hotel of its kind still to be found. Just down the road from the Hospitality House, eight miles out of Alderson, sits a

stately three-story brick hotel built by Andrew Pence in 1918. In its heyday, the Pence Spring Hotel attracted people from far and wide, especially after the water from its springs won the bronze medal at



the 1904 Saint Louis World's Fair.

Today the tourists are long gone, and many of the old resorts are left in ruins, but the 54 teenage girls who attend the Greenbrier Academy for Girls, a therapeutic boarding school, have brought the old Pence Spring

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ALDERSON CONTINUED

Hotel back to life. The girls are very active in the area and have been volunteering at the Hospitality House since the school opened 3 years ago. Tina Marquart, former AHH Director, also works at the Greenbrier Academy as the Residential Coordinator.

After nine months at AHH, I find myself in a situation similar to Tina's a year ago. I love the Hospitality House dearly but am excited to take on new challenges. Working at the Greenbrier Academy will allow me to remain close to and active with the Hospitality House while at the same time providing me the opportunity to pursue a masters degree.

Sometimes transitions like this one can be difficult but it quickly became clear that this

one was meant to be. A week after I took the job at Greenbrier Academy and signed the lease on my Alderson apartment, David King, former AHH Director, phoned to see if his daughter, Annika, could come to spend some time volunteering full time at the Hospitality House. We were glad to welcome an extra set of experienced hands around the house and happily accepted her offer to join us.

As we have been working together, Annika has often remarked with her witty smile how surprised she is to be back here in Alderson. I understand how she feels as I too am pleasantly surprised that this beautiful little valley is to remain my home. Maybe all those tourists back in the day were right...there really is something about the water. 🌿

COMING HOME

By ANNIEKA

It was like going back in time as my parents and I drove into the quiet, sleepy, West Virginia town of Alderson after four years away. This time, though, they were leaving their adult daughter and heading back up to New York. Driving into town, my first impression was 'wow, nothing has changed' the dollar stores are still here, Stuarts, the Big Wheel, the walking bridge, even Tonto, just as I had remembered it. We crossed the bridge over our old Greenbrier River, passed the sign for the FPC, and when we saw the bright orange train station, turned right to find new neighbors and many more potholes in the road. Our 'Little House' had a different look with toys in the front yard and a pet pig living in the back. I knew right away that I had some "interesting" new co-workers. Then, there was the 'Big House' and I felt the same excitement I had as a twelve year old the first time I saw the three-story, fairy tale house. As we walked up the front steps I remembered how I had ran up them a few years back, quickly introduced myself to John and Hillary Bennish who were the directors at the time, and then set off to explore.



Each room had a unique look with brightly painted walls and matching curtains and beds. The doors all had the names of strange ladies painted on the front. I had never heard of Septima Clark or Jean Gump before. The wooden floors and stairs creaked and sloped at an angle. We learned that if something was spilled it not only soaked into the floor boards but would also run into the bedrooms if it wasn't cleaned up immediately. To me the porch on the second floor was a balcony, not a smoking porch. I was so fascinated by everything.

Hillary showed my sisters and me to our

(Continued on page 3)

STATISTICS CONTINUED

datory, making it almost impossible for a judge to hand down less time than the guidelines called for. The Booker decision was an important step forward as it allowed for individualized and, in many cases, shorter sentences.

Unlike sentencing guidelines, mandatory minimum sentences are determined by Congress and are not advisory. Judges must follow them even if they feel that doing so is unjust. Congress first passed mandatory minimum laws in 1986 and then made them stricter 2 years later. While the intention (winning the drug war) may have been good, the laws, which mandate sentences based solely on the type and weight of drug and presence of a firearm, have been a disaster. 2.3 million people are currently incarcerated in the United States and that number represents almost 25% of the world's incarcerated population. Our mandatory minimum laws are one of the main reasons that a country with less than 5% of the world's population houses one quarter of the world's inmates. The majority of those incarcerated in the U.S. are non-violent, first time offenders who have been sentenced under mandatory minimums. These laws have taken control out of the hands of judges and placed it into the hands of congress resulting in a 500% increase in the American prison population.

Making changes for the better in these massive systems can be agonizingly slow, but it is not impossible. Just last year, the Fair Sentencing Act was signed into law. It applies only to sentencing in cases involving crack cocaine, but each year almost 3,000 people are charged with federal crack offenses. The

sentences resulting from federal crack charges will now be an average of 27 months shorter than they were prior to the Fair Sentencing Act. The changes to the mandatory minimums in crack cases alone will save taxpayers an estimated \$42 million over the next five years.

At the Hospitality House, we don't want anyone to feel like a statistic, but we must be aware of the numbers. We need to continue paying attention because there is so much work to be done. Sentences prior to last year were so harsh and unreasonable that the Fair Sentencing Act passed the Senate unanimously, and yet the law is not retroactive. People sentenced the day before the law was signed on August 3rd will continue serving sentences that even the governing body that made them recognizes as unjust.



One of the biggest obstacles to sentencing reform is that relatively few people realize how important and necessary it is, and among those who do, few take action. In this age when politicians can score big points by locking people up, those of us who care about those people need to get involved and speak up. Please check out the Sentencing Project, www.sentencingproject.org and Families Against Mandatory Minimums, www.famm.org. Spend fifteen minutes learning about the work they are doing and how you can help; then, call your elected officials and ask them to support federal sentencing reform. 🌿

POETRY
CORNER

Written 2 minutes after I
heard of his birth.

Charlie—
October 13, 2010 9PM

Perfect in every way
You were born today
7 lbs., 7 oz, 20^{1/2}“

We waited so long, that
I made up this song,
7 lbs., 7 oz, 20^{1/2}“

As soon as I knew,
I rejoiced for you!
7 lbs., 7 oz, 20^{1/2}“

Grateful I am
You complete the plan
7 lbs., 7 oz, 20^{1/2}“

You will be my joy,
Our new baby boy,
7 lbs., 7 oz, 20^{1/2}“

My wish is for you,
to be HAPPY too,
7 lbs., 7 oz, 20^{1/2}“

My promise to you,
Is that I'll be there
for YOU
7 lbs., 7 oz, 20^{1/2}“

Diane Smith
FPC
Alderson

Battered Angel

While sleeping one night I had a dream, It left a tale to tell.
I dreamed I saw an angel, and she wasn't looking well.

Her body was bruised and battered, Her wings ripped and torn.
I saw that she could barely walk, she was tired, weary and worn.

I walked over to her and said, "Angel, how can this be?"
As she looked back at me and tried to smile, she said these words to me...

"I'm your guardian angel, Quite a job as you can see.
You've lived a very hard life, with that you must agree.

You've broken laws and hearts, what you see you've done to me.
These bruises are from shielding you, each day I do my best still.

The drugs you've used so recklessly, I've often paid the bill.
My wings you see are ripped and torn, A noble badge I bear.

So many times they've shielded you, Though you were unaware.
Yes, every mark has its story, of pain and danger I've destroyed.

You've made me wish, more than once, that I was unemployed.
If you would only embrace life, And choose to do good on your own.

It would end the pain and suffering, that goes with being your chaperone.
I will always be there to watch over you, until my strength finally fails.

As for when that will be? All I can say is I'm getting old and frail."

When I awoke I thought about my dream, How much she seemed to care.

Then I looked around my prison cell, And my heart sank in despair.
As I sat there, thought and wondered, "why should I even try?"

Lance P. Wickner
Stillwater, MN



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! 🌟

HOUSE NOTES

By KATHLEEN

We are so excited that spring is finally here. I love the weather in spring: hot during the day, cool at night. The green has spread across the mountain-side, which is quite a blessing for us after the browns and grays of winter. Our teenage guests took advantage of the Spring weather, playing ghosts in the graveyard in the park and basketball out back. Some of the crew even went hunting for ramps (a wild onion native to these hills) with Ashley, and we served them for dinner.

I love the new life that Spring brings, and have been excited to start the garden growing. We've expanded our garden efforts to the renewed community garden across the river near the Catholic Church. Hopefully, this will bring in some more fresh vegetables for the guests to enjoy.

COMING HOME CONTINUED

room-Rosa Parks, and we immediately started a fight over who would have to sleep on the top of the bunk bed. We soon discovered the park across the street with its ancient, but graceful willow trees and creek full of the biggest crawdaddies I had ever seen. Behind the house was a steep hillside where we created the most amazing swings out of vines. That first summer my little sister and I could often be found eating ice pops and swinging on our vine swings. It didn't take long for me to fall in love with Alderson.

We all shed tears the day we left. None of us had foreseen that our friends at the house

Thank you to all of you who joined us at the Open House event.

We had a wonderful time meeting new people and chatting with old friends. We kicked off the day with a Lenten lunch. Every week during Lent the church community in Alderson shares in a message and lunch. A television reporter showed up to do a story about AHH. Later, in the evening, the Chili-Cook-Off was a great success; Fritz Boetner won the Golden Ladle, and Maria Madariaga won the Silver Spoon.

If you didn't
(Continued on page 4)

and in town would become such a big part of our lives and nobody real-

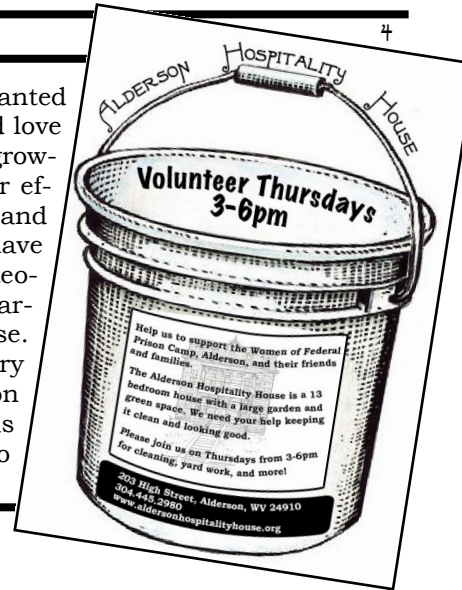
ized how much we would miss West Virginia once we were gone. Often we reminisce about our 20 months at AHH until people get tired of hearing our fascinating stories of West Virginia mountain people, the beautiful countryside and the stories of thousands of people we met from all across America.

Now, here I am again as an adult and I've realized the biggest change has been me. I am happy to be here volunteering at the house. Sometimes though, I want to be a kid again so I can run up the hill out back and swing on the old vines. 🌟



HOUSE NOTES CONTINUED

make to the Open House and wanted to, stop on by anytime. We would love to show you around the place. Our volunteer participation is growing, and we look forward to having more people join us in our efforts to support the women at the camp and their friends and families. In addition to Stefen, our biweekly volunteer, we have had girls from High Rocks and people from the School of Osteopathic Medicine in Lewisburg (through United Way's Day of Caring) join us on separate occasions to help out around the house. We have four volunteers from the prison camp joining us every Thursday, and we would also like to invite you to join us on Thursdays. If you are in town, we hope you are able to help us out! Every Thursday from 3-6pm we are opening our doors to anyone willing to help. Contact us for more information. 🐼



PUTTING A NAME TO THE STATISTICS

By BRIAN

When a person or family unexpectedly has to find their way through the justice and prison systems everything can feel so impersonal. Normal conversations are replaced by talk about calculating good time, writing appeals, or remembering that darn inmate number. All you want to do is be together as a family. Similarly, on the national level discussions involve a lot of statistics and numbers like crime and recidivism rates, but very little talk of people and families.



Here at the Hospitality House we see where the personal and the statistical sides of incarceration come together. After countless evenings with families of inmates, we see clearly that statistics are not merely numbers; they are people. Thus, when we hear or read about a politician bragging that he or she is "tough on crime"

we are naturally weary. The phrase is an easy way to gain votes, but what does it mean? If it means looking at issues such as the drug problem with a nuanced and discerning eye, considering all the complexities involved, and comparing how affective treatment can be versus incarceration, then we are all for being "tough on crime". These days politicians are often willing to spend money building new prisons and pass mandatory minimum laws so that more people are in prison for longer periods of time.

Sentencing guidelines and mandatory minimums are two areas that affect so many of the women our guests come to visit. Sentencing guidelines are written by the U.S. Sentencing Commission and apply only in Federal Courts. Those guidelines are advisory tools that judges must consider when giving a sentence. Prior to 2005 and the landmark case *United States v. Booker*, sentencing guidelines were man-

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HELP US KEEP THE LIGHTS ON - THE ANNUAL FUND

By KATHLEEN



Please make all checks payable to
Alderson Hospitality House
or donate online at
www.aldersonhospitalityhouse.org

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Here at the house, we are grateful for your generosity thus far, but our light bulb still isn't shining yet. Our guests depend on you to keep this house open and the lights turned on. Please continue to keep us in your thoughts as you decide which organizations to support this year. 🐼

WISH LIST

Everyday Items

Postage Stamps
Large (39+ gallon) Trash Bags
Laundry Detergent (for HE)
Dryer Sheets
Toilet Paper
Light Bulbs
Fresh Produce
Dry Beans
Lemonade/Iced
Tea Mix
5 Gallon Buckets
Mason Jars

Willing to spend a bit more?

Glass cake stand
Horse Shoe Set
Landscaping shrubs
Standard size pillows
Sheets (please call for details)
Two Drawer Filing Cabinet
Quality wash cloths

For the big spenders out there:

Windows for the Little House
Riding Lawn Mower
Dyson Vacuum (DC14 Telescope)
Carpet Cleaner
Power Washer
Economy Car

