

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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Paul Loos	Tod Hanger
Gloria Martin	Nancy Burris
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AHH STAFF

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



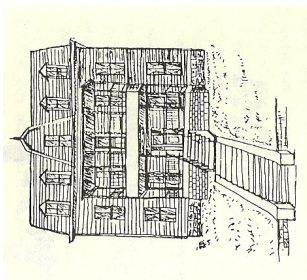
www.amtrak.com

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!

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



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WINTER 2019

THE MANY STEPS OF THE FIRST STEP ACT

By BRIAN

At 1:10pm on December 21, 2018, President Trump signed the FIRST STEP Act into law. This was a significant victory for prison and sentencing reform advocates. As its name implies, it is not a panacea for the broken parts of the criminal justice system but as many clichés state, the first step is often the toughest.

The journey towards the passage of this law was a long and challenging one which offers an excellent lesson on the myriad steps that any legislative progress on criminal justice reform will have to take. The machinery of government does not move quickly, especially when it comes to correcting the mistakes of the past such as mandatory minimums, unjust sentencing guidelines and “three strikes” laws, but the signing of this bill shows that with determination, political skill and a bit of luck, progress is possible.

So what were the first steps of what would be-

come the FIRST STEP Act? In 2013 the Smarter Sentencing Act was introduced by Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL). The legislation was the first significant attempt to address the problems associated with mandatory minimum sentences. It would not have abolished mandatory minimums, but would have

significantly increased the latitude that a judge was given regarding sentencing in a case based on the merits of that case, such as the defendant's past criminal background. Despite garnering significant bi-partisan support,

the legislation died during the committee process... but the ball was rolling.

Next came The Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act (SCRA) which Durbin and Chuck Grassley (R-IA) introduced in 2015. This bill with similar objectives to its predecessor had massive bi-partisan support. However, the opposition of then senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL) and Tom Cotton (R-AK) both of

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Photo Credit: First Step Act

HOUSE NOTES

By KATHLEEN

As it is every winter, the Hospitality House has quieted down in many ways. Children have school and adults don't want to drive through the snow and ice. It is a time when most of our guests are regulars who have become like family to us. There is plenty to do, as wood needs to be split and snow needs to be shoveled, but the House has a different feel than during other seasons.

There are moments, however, that are full of excitement. Early in December an unexpected storm dumped about 20 inches of snow that kept Brian, and a few guests, shoveling steps, parking lots, and even the driveway every hour or two. The sub zero temperatures had us moving wood, stoking fires and dripping faucets to avoid frozen pipes. Fortunately, along with the cold of the season, we get to en-

joy the warmth and celebration of the holidays with our Hospitality House family.

While it's never fun to be away from loved ones during the holidays, we try to make Thanksgiving and Christmas a time of joy at AHH. Every open counter is filled with food, including a big turkey from local farmer Donald Blake, side dishes made at AHH by so many contributing guests, and desserts made and brought by board members and area supporters. We enjoy food and fellowship around the tables, which are as loving and busy as any we spent with our own families growing up.

Speaking of our families, soon after Thanksgiving, my parents traveled from Ohio to help decorate for Christmas. Brian is not a fan of holiday decorating and with 4 trees and 3 floors to decorate, their help and company is appreciated to say the least. With the halls decked and many of the adults helping to prepare dinner, the kids were having their fun in the Paul Hickey family room hanging out with a guest who

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with us? If you would like to submit a recipe to be published in the cookbook, please mail it to:

AHH Cookbook
PO Box 579
Alderson, WV 24910

Please let me know if you would like your name and or location to be placed alongside the recipe. I look forward to reading them and learning about the creativity you use to turn simple ingredients into delicious snacks, meals, and desserts. 🍪



COOKBOOK

This year, I am working on creating a cookbook to sell as a fundraiser for the AHH. I really want to include a section for "Recipes from the Inside". I know that our incarcerated readers create some pretty incredible food from the limited resources at their disposal. Over a decade after his release, I can still remember Brian raving about caramel cheese cake, Lo Mein, and pizza prepared by the guys at the Taft Correctional Institution. Would you be willing to share your secrets

HOUSE NOTES CONTINUED

happened to be a real life professional Santa and decorating gingerbread houses donated, as always, by Lisa and Alan Zuccari. The kids (and several adults) are always so proud of their creations and more than a little hyper from all the candy they've consumed while decorating. I'm especially grateful for the Hickey family room during Thanksgiving and Christmas meal prep. Without the space it provides, the cute and energetic kids would more closely resemble monsters invading an already chaotic kitchen.

Our kitchen has had its share of challenges this winter. In the midst of these holidays with their big meals and turkeys to be roasted, the igniter on the stove broke. It didn't just stop clicking; no...instead I got quite a scare. I was doing my weekly deep cleaning of the kitchen one Monday, and I heard a pop and saw a streak of red! Immediately there was smoke coming out of the burner. I quickly turned off the power to the stove, shut off the gas, and felt a little relief knowing that my husband had recently passed his test to become a certified member of the Alderson Volunteer Fire Department. Fortunately, no

fire trucks were needed and a far less dramatic call was placed to our repairman. I was grateful that it didn't happen in the middle of making a meal for 45 hungry guests. With a big old house like AHH there is always something that can go wrong. I really appreciate our repairman who was not only able to get the stove to work (though with a manual start) in time for Christmas dinner, but also did not try to rip us off by suggesting we buy the expensive igniter part and pay him to install it. Instead, he warned us that this was just the beginning of the end of the whole range. Thankfully, we started looking for a

new one because at the beginning of February, the oven stopped heating. And as you'll see on page 6 of this newsletter, we are still trying to pay for it. We are off to a good start in that fundraising effort and as warm days become more frequent amongst the chilly ones, I will soon be

working in a fully functioning kitchen. Bring on the Spring! 🌸



FIRST STEP CONTINUED

must overcome in order to become law. The FIRST STEP Act shows that progress is possible right now. This is a critical time to maintain the momentum because the presidency of Donald Trump has provided a unique environment in which the scales have tipped in favor of efforts of reform. If the President remains interested in criminal justice reform and leaders from both parties see

that compromise can result in wins for both sides, the families we serve at the Hospitality House and their incarcerated loved ones should feel a glimmer of hope for what could come next. 🌸

POETRY
CORNER*House of Hospitality**By: Dan Gladich*

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

So all are gathered here,
not in name alone
but spirit also,
a history lesson,
a revival of sorts.
Maggie Louden's vision
to provide visitors a haven
to rest from a long and arduous journey,
physically and emotionally,
the destination both anticipated
and dreaded. On this neutral ground,
without judgment, but only compassion,
soujourners receive succor and
gather strength to embrace the outcasts
of society: the poor, the destitute, the desperate.
Society's offal, cast aside for acts against
the State, denied the justice of the wealth

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! 🌐

OPEN DOWN-WE NEED YOUR HELP

For the past few weeks, we have been conducting an on-line fundraiser to help pay for our dead range. While we have raised over \$1,000, that is not enough to pay for the type of equipment we need to serve dinner for so many. Please help our efforts by sending a check or going on-line and donating. 🌐

<https://www.mightycause.com/story/Ycqu2f>



FIRST STEP CONTINUED

whom were and continue to be opposed to any prison reform legislation, sank the bill. While many on both sides of the aisle recognized the need for prison reform legislation, it appeared that any efforts to achieve real progress would be stifled by the political climate of the time in which one party's leadership dug into the position of being "tough on crime" and the other was not able to put together effective solutions to the problem of over-incarceration in America.

The political landscape shifted in many ways with the inauguration of President Trump in 2017. This was certainly the case regarding prison reform as from the outset of his presidency, he has sent mixed signals in this arena. He has scored significant support from his base and the right with aggressive language suggesting that more executions would benefit American society, and hopes of criminal justice reform certainly faded when he nominated Jeff Sessions to be the nation's top law enforcement officer. The reintroduction of SCRA by Durbin and Grassley seemed dead on arrival; however, in early 2018, President Trump and the White House started talking about criminal justice reform.

With the President talking extensively about reforming the prison system, the inevitable attacks from his party on previous efforts to achieve such reforms suddenly ceased. The Prison Reform and Redemption Act was supported by the White House; though, organizations such as Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM) opposed the legislation because it did not include any significant reforms to sentencing; and thus, would have had minimal impact on the US prison population.

The name of the Bill was changed to the FIRST STEP Act, and some improvements were made regarding sentencing before the bill was passed by the House 360-59. The bill was able to pass easily mainly because it sounded good while proposing to do very little and because the Senate was unlikely to take up any version of the legislation. Once again, it seemed like this latest attempt to reform prisons and sentencing in America was doomed to fail; but then

in November of last year, a rare compromise was reached between Republican and Democrat leaders, which would add significant portions of SCRA to the FIRST STEP Act that would make real progress in sentencing. Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) was not eager to bring the bill to the floor, but politics can make for some unusual combination of allies as the President and the Koch brothers pressured him from the right and grassroots groups from Kentucky and national organizations such as FAMM lobbied him from the left.

Once the legislation reach the floor of the Senate, the outcome remained uncertain. Jeff Sessions opposition to sentencing reform in the Senate was no longer an issue due to his being hired and subsequently fired from the post of Attorney General by President Trump. However, Session's old pal Cotton and John Kennedy (R-LA) tried to kill the legislation by pushing amendments designed to fracture the bi-partisan group supporting it.

Sensing that the time had finally come for the first step towards prison reform to be taken, McConnell used procedural maneuvers to protect the legislation, and it passed with full support from Democrats and all but a small minority of Republicans. Then House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) made way for a quick consideration of the bill by the House which passed it and sent it to the President's desk to be signed.

The naming of this law is appropriate. While it is a victory, it is at the same time a significant and relatively small step in the right direction. Since 1980, the prison population has grown by 700 percent. Due to the perhaps well-meaning but poorly executed war on drugs, spending on federal prisons has risen by 600 percent over the same time period. The majority of federal inmates are serving sentences resulting from non-violent drug offenses and mandatory minimum sentencing has unduly affected minority and low income populations.

All of these variables come together to reveal the need for more progress on sentencing and prison reform, as well as, the potential obstacles legislation

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RECIPES FROM THE KITCHEN

Cashew Cream

Brian and I eat a mostly dairy free diet. To some people that seems crazy, but we have felt much better since eliminating dairy. I have found some amazing recipes that help me not to miss my beloved cheeses that I just can't eat anymore. I thought I'd share one with you...everyone loves nacho cheese...the creamy consistency is perfect for smothering on your taco or over a tortilla chip, but if you really look at what's in nacho cheese, you'll see in addition to some dairy, there's a lot of chemicals and food coloring. This cashew cream is a natural replacement for that gooey goodness...and I would argue it even tastes better.

2 Cups Raw Cashew	1 Teaspoon Garlic Powder
3-4 Cups Hot Water (Starchy water* works best but is not mandatory)	1 Teaspoon Onion Powder
Juice from 1 lime or lemon (3 Tablespoons)	1/2 Teaspoon Paprika
1/2 Cup Nutritional Yeast	1/2 Teaspoon Chili Powder
	2 Teaspoons Salt

1. Combine everything in a blender, starting with 3 cups of water and blend until smooth.
2. Transfer to a medium size saucepot; then, use the last cup of water to clean out the blender and pour that into the saucepot.
3. Heat on medium, stirring often, until the mixture bubbles. Add water to thin and cook longer to thicken to your desire.
4. Serve warm over tacos, broccoli, pasta, or even with chips.

*Starchy water is the water left over after you boil pasta or potatoes or even corn.

Raise money for AHH while you shop online. Go to smile.amazon.com, and search for Alderson Hospitality House as your charity. You get all the Amazon options, and they send us a portion of what you spend with no added cost to you.



Raise money for AHH without spending a dime. Every time you search the internet using goodsearch, you can raise money for the Hospitality House. Go to goodsearch.com to find out more.

Raise money for AHH while buying your groceries. Go to krogercommunityrewards.com and register your Kroger Plus card to automatically give a percentage of every sale to AHH. Our number is 85722. Use it when you sign up today!



Like Us on Facebook! You can follow us and keep up with what is going on at AHH throughout the year.

THE ANNUAL FUND

As winter comes to a close, it's already time to start piling up wood for next winter. Just as wood collecting never ends, the same is true for fundraising. We need to keep collecting donations from you so that we can continue helping the many families that come to visit their loved ones. And similar to wood, we use and value donations of all sizes. Whether it's kindling or big huge logs, all of it has a role in keeping our guests warm and comfortable. You, too, can have a role in sup-

porting our guest, by donating to AHH, no matter whether it's a \$5 donation or a \$5,000, all of it is appreciated. 🌲

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 (Not decaf)
Postage Stamps
Ink Pens
Dish Soap
Dryer Sheets
Toilet Paper
Paper Towels
Hand Soap Refills
AA or AAA Batteries
Fresh Produce
Pasta
Pasta Sauce
Lemonade/Iced Tea Mix
Kroger Gift Cards

Willing to spend a bit more?

Bath Towels to match the rooms
Dehydrator
Small working lamps

For the big spenders:

New Twin Size Mattresses
Chainsaw
Fire Wood

GOAL
\$90,000

FEBRUARY
\$13,410

