



MARGENSER

Fostering Unity and Carrying the AA Message in Area 29 Maryland General Service

Newly Elected

AREA 29 PANEL 68 OFFICERS

On October 21, 2017 the Area Assembly comprised of Area Officers, Committee leaders, GSRs and DCMs elected a New Delegate and Area Officers to lead us for the next two years beginning January 1, 2018. Please be sure to welcome the new Panel 68 Area 29 Officers of Maryland General Service, Inc.

They are:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| DELEGATE: | DON B. |
| ALTERNATE DELEGATE: | CYNTHIA T. |
| CHAIRMAN: | VICTOR K. |
| SECRETARY: | DAWN H. |
| TREASURER: | STEPHANIE L. |

A Solution for All Generations

Don B., Area 29 Chairperson



As we wind up another year of personal and corporate spiritual progress through service to others, it's only natural not only to reflect on our past blessings, but also to look forward to what comes next. The theme for our 2018 General Service Conference is "A.A. —

A Solution for All Generations." This conception ties together the past, present, and future as completely as any idea possibly could. For we who have suffered alcoholic torture have now recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body, and paradoxically have become happily and usefully whole. It is nothing short of a wholesale miracle, and spreading the good news about how we have found a solution to the age-old dilemma of alcoholism is the rallying point which animates A.A. members around the globe, no matter what their language, race, creed, color, spiritual or sexual orientation, or age.

The 68th Annual General Service Conference in 2018 also has five Presentation and Discussion Topics which are all related to the overarching theme of "A Solution for All Generations":

1. Today's Alcoholic: Inclusion, Not Exclusion. We strive to adhere to our Third Tradition, that the only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking. We welcome all who suffer from alcoholism.

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Service Gladly Rendered

Linda J., Panel 66, Area 29 Delegate



In 1951, Bill W. wrote "...through our Third Legacy—Service— we shall carry the AA message down through the corridors of time to come."

Thank goodness Bill was looking out for me before I was born and long before I even took my first drink!! No doubt, without folks being willing to gladly step up to the plate of service in A.A., most of us would still be wandering aimlessly.

I agree with Bill, "A. A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action". In the beginning of my sobriety, I had no idea what this meant. Even as I began to "do stuff" and "help others" at my first Home Group, I had no idea those actions were the actual seeds of service. I thought service would be a weight around my neck and a burden on my time. No coincidence that it has turned out to be an anchor in the storm. Service has saved my life many times. During times of intense sadness and loss, I have always had a place to land and be present for the next suffering alcoholic.

As time moved on, I had to go beyond the risk of doing nothing! I was taught I could fake knowledge, but I could never fake showing up. It wasn't until I got involved at the District and Area level that I learned how to play in the sandbox of service. As I come to the end of my Delegate term, I have been encouraged to assess the fruit of my efforts. My Service Sponsor and mentors have challenged me to look

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Service Gladly Rendered *continued from cover*

around myself. . . look behind me to see the difference I am making, while continuing to follow those on the road in front of me. Am I tethered to a sober person in service in front of me? I challenge each of you to take a look as well. It is vital for us all to look at the difference we make as we trudge along the road. I must always remember, aiming toward the goal is most important; the shot may be off, but I am always moving in the right direction.

As I pause to reflect, it is fair to say I have reaped enormous dividends from all the Delegate experiences which will stay with me the rest of my life. God has grown me spiritually in ways I would never have known were possible IF I hadn't been willing to learn how to serve, and then been willing to stand and serve according to His plan over the years.

There has been no greater honor in my life than to serve the Fellowship of Area 29 as your Panel 66 Delegate. Some of the intangible rewards I have received while serving as Delegate include:

1. A huge perspective shift while participating in the committee process during Conference and observing how much "real" work can be accomplished with eight folks over a couple days. A great example of the importance of "We" in service work.
2. During the Conference, I experienced the true meaning of unity. It was powerful to be a part of the process which "LINKS" the Delegate to the Groups in Area 29 on the one end of the tin can telephone and the service boards of Alcoholics Anonymous on the other end.
3. The knowledge I was an integral part of the decision making for all of Alcoholics Anonymous during the 66th and 67th General Service Conferences was truly humbling. None of the voting members were there for any personal gain, and so it was easy to "keep the main thing the main thing."
4. Participating during the January Board meeting as the Delegate Chair of the Conference Finance Committee was enlightening and awe-inspiring to see just how much work our volunteer trusted servant Board members do on our behalf. It is one thing to read about the structure in the Concepts. To sit in the room and participate. . . well, there really are no words to describe this experience fully.

5. The depth of new friendships forged during the last two years within the Fellowship of Area 29, all the way down to the General Service Board at the bottom of the triangle has been an inspiration, and has had a profound influence on my life.
6. I am so grateful for all of those little acts of kindness when I least expected them from so many across Area 29 over the past two years; from the cards, calls, emails, dinners, walks in the park and the list goes ad infinitum. Thank you all for your thoughts and prayers which made footprints on my heart.
7. A huge thank you to the Officers and all the Area Committee members who served Area 29 during Panel 66. Serving you and serving with you will always be high on my gratitude list.
8. Utilizing the wealth of knowledge, experience, and resources our Past Delegates were always willing to share allowed me to grow and think abundantly. I am so grateful to be well Sponsored and know the value of reaching out for assistance, and the gift of delegating.
9. Watching my husband, Morgan, and daughter, Carly, support me through the busiest times of my entire life these past two years truly warms my heart and brings great joy. It really taught me the significance of being present during the short periods of time we had to spend together. Without a doubt, both of them were the wind beneath my wings, and I am so blessed.

“ I will forever be grateful to Area 29 for this unbelievable opportunity for spiritual growth through service. God has truly worked in miraculous ways, His wonders to perform. It seems I have barely scratched a limitless load, and I am Responsible for giving away the whole thing for the rest of my life! ”

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Panel 66, Area 29 Delegate.



Theme of the 68th General Service Conference in 2018 will be:

“A.A. ~ A Solution for All Generations”

The Presentation/Discussion and Workshop topics will include:

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. Today's Alcoholic: Inclusion, Not Exclusion | d. Attraction Not Promotion: A.A.'s Relation to the World |
| b. Participation in All of A.A.! Is My Triangle Balanced? | e. Group Conscience: The Guiding Force |
| c. A.A. Technology: Where Innovation Meets the Traditions | |



A Solution for All Generations *continued from cover*

- 2. **Participation in All of A.A.—Is My Triangle Balanced?** We must pay equal attention to each of our Three Legacies—Recovery through the daily practice of our Twelve Steps, Unity through the application in our daily lives of our Twelve Traditions, and Service guided by the spiritual principles of our Twelve Concepts. Anything less would be shortchanging ourselves and diminishing our contribution to the world.
- 3. **A.A. Technology: Where Innovation Meets the Traditions.** This is not only where the rubber meets the road, but where the past merges with the future to form the ever-present now. How can we apply the hard-earned lessons of our past heritage to the rapidly-changing face of scientific advances and communications innovation? How do we prevent Alcoholics Anonymous from becoming an anachronism in the modern world?
- 4. **Attraction, Not Promotion: A.A.'s Relations to the World.** Now that miracles of recovery are no longer deemed newsworthy, how do we continue to minister to the alcoholic who still suffers and communicate intelligently with those who might steer the suffering alcoholic in our direction?
- 5. **Group Conscience: The Guiding Force.** This is the feature which sets apart A.A. from every other institution in the world today—the power of a Loving God, who speaks through the will of our informed group conscience. How do we continue to seek and nurture that source of power which can conquer fear, death, and even alcohol?

And just to make sure everyone is paying attention, the 2018 General Service Conference Workshop Topic is: **“Getting the A.A. Message Out...”** This reminds us of our primary purpose, the study and teaching of how we apply the Twelve Steps of our program of recovery so all who need and want sobriety may find much of heaven and be rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence of which they had not even dreamed. Has that been happening for you? If so, there is nothing left but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at your feet and show others how they have worked with you. Simple, but not easy. What an order! Yet others have demonstrated it for us. Now it’s our turn to demonstrate to the world the power of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The spiritual principles have all been spelled out for us to put into practical use—Inclusion, Balance, Technology, Attraction, and Group Conscience. So let’s get to work at

“Getting the A.A. Message Out...”

After all, there is no easier, softer way to prove what we have found:

“A.A.—A Solution for All Generations!”

To Post or Not To Post—That Is The Question

Morgan J.

It’s a shame that Euclid of Alexandria and Sir Isaac Newton aren’t here to advise us about social media. Unfortunately they left us a long time ago, but their discoveries can help us when we are trying to make a decision about whether we should post or not post. Euclid discovered and wrote about Geometric sequences (progression) in the Book IX of Elements in 300 BC and Sir Isaac Newton’s “Third Law” is “For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.” Sir Isaac discovered this in the 18th century.

Simplifying these statements just a little bit; we can take a small stone and throw it into a pond, the first reaction will be a splash (reaction), but there will also be waves (progression). How many things will these waves hit (reaction and progression) and finally what will the outcome be (reaction)? How many will be affected (progression)?

WHEN ONE FRIEND HAS 100 FRIENDS WHO HAS 100 FRIENDS, ETC.	
<i>It only takes Ten likes</i>	
Likes	
1	1
2	100
3	1000
4	10,000
5	1,000,000
6	100,000,000
7	10,000,000,000
8	1,000,000,000,000,
9	100,000,000,000,000
10	10,000,000,000,000,000

Does all this sound strange, like what has this got to do with me? Well, everything. If you are a user of any kind of social media, your post might be just like that small stone thrown into the pond. You might ask yourself, how many people are going to see this and worse yet, how many will it affect. One of your friends might be going for a job interview or maybe applying for a security clearance. Have we considered how their chances will be affected by our post? They do check you know. Another friend may have family members who haven’t been “told” yet. Will this spill the beans? We are responsible for our actions. Are we willing to pay the price?

The table/chart above shows the wave action if everyone in the chain were to like your post and this is only after ten layers of friends. Maybe Bill was right when he said that anonymity is our most priceless asset.





Our Common Welfare

Arnold R.

The long form of Tradition One states, "Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward." (*The A.A. Service Manual Combined With Twelve Concepts for World Service*, p. S13)

In the *Language of the Heart*, Bill writes: "Tradition One asks us to place the common good ahead of personal desires." (p. 93) He continues later in the same text, "This really means that our personal ambitions will have to be set aside every time they conflict with the safety or the effectiveness of our Fellowship. It means that we must sometimes love our Society more than ourselves." (p. 317)

When I arrived at the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous, my welfare came first. The whole world revolved around me. If it didn't pertain to me, I wasn't interested. I wanted meetings to be held at times and in places which were convenient for me. I wanted the chairperson to select a topic which addressed the Step or dilemma which faced me at the moment. I wanted to be allowed to talk as much or as little as I thought I needed at the time. I looked for the piece of literature which addressed the alcoholic thinking and behavior which I perceived was my problem of the day.

Attention to our common welfare describes mature actions I was not capable of taking when I arrived here in our glorious Fellowship. It was only by following the directions my sponsor gave me when I began to change from living in my immature activities to taking the appropriate actions. With my sponsor's suggestions, I learned to observe the Twelve Traditions by taking correct actions long before I really felt like it.

It seems as if I had to act my way into right thinking, and before I realized it, I began to feel and believe our common welfare should come first.

What are some of the things our groups and members do to place our common welfare first? "True brotherhood, harmony, and love, fortified by clear insights and right practices, are the only answers." (*A.A. Comes of Age*, p. 98) When we quietly usher a drunk or disruptive member out of a meeting to talk with him/her privately, we are assuring a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous will continue for those others present who want it.

When the meeting chairperson selects a topic from A. A. literature and calls on sober members of Alcoholic Anonymous to share their experience strength and hope, this assures us a meeting of A. A. is being held rather than a self-help group meeting or a group therapy session. When we hold closed meetings for alcoholics only, we are not excluding our nonalcoholic friends; rather, we are placing the welfare of Alcoholics Anonymous first.

When I go to an A. A. meeting and have pressing personal problems which seems to have nothing whatsoever to do with the Step,

Tradition, or Concept being discussed, I don't attempt to turn the meeting into a forum for my woes. Instead, I try to see what I can add to the discussion or remain silent and call my sponsor later. When I find the perfect spiritual book, exercise program, diet or other solution to add to the already perfect program of Alcoholics Anonymous, I refrain from taking precious meeting time to sing its praises thereby diluting the A.A. message just to show off my own ideas.



THE LANGUAGE OF THE HEART

Bill W.'s Grapevine Writings

When our trusted servants speak publicly about A.A. or carry the message to the newcomer in a treatment facility, correctional facility, on the phone, or in their homes, these members think constantly of how Alcoholics Anonymous might be affected by their words and actions, thus concerning themselves with the welfare of the whole fellowship. When a group or service committee maintains the spirit of rotation among its trusted servants, the personal pride and ambition of a few are set aside for the good of the whole.

When we choose the sites for our Regional Forums, Area Assemblies, Area Committee, and other service functions, we attempt to base our decisions on considerations such as giving everyone the opportunity of hosting the event, holding the event in an area/district that would most benefit from having a service activity, and not requiring the same people to drive long distances all the time. Additionally, we choose the site based on considerations other than great tourist attractions or large concentrations of population.

With these practices, we assure equal participation in service by all members of Alcoholics Anonymous, not just by the urban, affluent, mobile, or some other subset of our membership. The concern is with all of us, not just some of us.

Delegates to the General Service Conference gather, not as representatives of their areas ready to fight for what the folks at home want, but instead as each area's contribution to the collective group conscience of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. Each year, these trusted servants are asked to make decisions which require their personal ambitions and opinions be placed aside in order to ensure the common welfare of AA comes first.

As we begin to move forward in anticipation of receiving the agendas presented for review at the 68th General Service Conference, I am hopeful all the members of our Fellowship will be guided by our Declaration of Unity: "This we owe to A.A.'s future: to place our common welfare first: to keep our Fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives, and the lives of those to come."





God is Not the Bad Guy

Tom M.

How many times have we heard in the rooms that someone turned off on seeking a spiritual union with God because their parents made them attend church as a child, and they found the preacher lacking? How many of us have used similar excuses to avoid prayer, or leave the church altogether? We kept away, sometimes with a vengeance, until we reached a point where we had no options. "God, please help me" we finally asked. And then, despite our years of absence, He responded, and we found new hope in recovery.


Such thinking is just another way of avoiding reality. We alcoholics are really good at denying what is all too obvious to others who believe in a Higher Power.

We say "God, as we understand Him" so we may welcome those who claim to be agnostic or atheist. No matter what we believe, we can find a spiritual home which welcomes us. Our vision of God, as we understand Him, is of a welcoming deity who wants us to be joyous and free, so we may be of use to our family and fellowship. We have left behind the images we may have learned as a child of a wrathful God who dishes out retribution for every fault we may have, for every transgression we may have committed.

Sometimes we add another twist to our thinking, as in "I'm an Irish Catholic, so a certain amount of drinking comes with the territory." This is just another way of diverting responsibility for our actions. In truth, it doesn't make any difference what our antecedents may be. We must still take responsibility for our own actions. The same line of reasoning applies to people of Jewish, Italian, or any other extraction. In the end, we are all God's children. He wants the best for us, not the worst. With His help, we can recover. With His help, we can attain the broad, sunlit uplands of sobriety, and stay there.

A central element of our twelve step program is forgiveness. As we forgive others, we in turn are given freedom from resentments which kept us from living full and happy lives. Our Higher Power is the source of our love for others, releasing us from the self-centeredness that consumed us. Now we have learned how to think logically again, to not be driven by chemistry and we can find His wisdom in many people. This is a good thing. We are on the right path.

So, instead of using old ways of thinking to deny the existence of a Higher Power, we embrace the promise of redemption. Instead of wallowing in self pity ("The church doesn't understand me!"), we open ourselves to understanding God's real purpose for us, to live happy, joyous and free. What a vision!

And to think it all started with a couple of drunks in Ohio. What a remarkable story. 



Reaching Out to the Under-Represented Districts

Many of our neighbors do not actively participate in Area 29, nor are their voices heard within AA as a whole. We encourage you to reach out to those districts without active GSRs or DCMs, sharing your experience of service beyond the home group and carrying the message one-on-one. Area 29 welcomes your ideas on how we can best do this and offers our support.

For more information, contact outreach@marylandaa.org.



Liquid Tempo

Mark B., MarGenSer Co-Chair

Five years minus 38 days ago, I was prone, face down on a hospital floor. Six words appeared in an alcohol addled brain. "Help me, somebody please help me." From that instant until now, this simple prayer has been answered day after day, hour after hour, moment after moment.

Answered in the form of the presence and words of members of the AA fellowship, my family, and my friends. And in the form of the many opportunities I have to be of service to AA and to carry the AA message to those who still suffer from alcoholism. Opportunities like answering the phone when a member of AA calls, saying "Yes" and then taking the action to fulfill that promise. Like listening with the sole intent to be present for the soul needing to be heard. Like staying up into the wee hours to monitor the phones for the Baltimore Intergroup answering service. Like serving as the MarGenSer Co-Chair. Like cleaning up the room after my home group meeting. Like attending my home group every week. Like giving out smiles, handshakes, and hugs.

Plain and ordinary actions, unspectacular, as they are – as they should be. Paying Forward the myriad generousities of others showed me how to get—and stay—sober.

There was a time, sometimes so long ago and sometimes just like yesterday, when I played golf five times a week. The pre-first tee shot

routine included three large gulps of vodka-laden lemonade. Courses were chosen based on how often the beer cart drove up to my golf cart. The periodicity had to be at least as often as every three holes or I'd never play that course again. All of this was to acquire what was euphemistically dubbed "liquid tempo".

Liquid tempo came to be a necessary part of everyday life. Drinking became akin to breathing. As if alcohol was life itself.

All this culminated in me lying on the hospital floor—desperate and hopeless. Caring neither about living nor about life.

Residing in each moment, one at a time, in the order they arise—is the tempo which moves and guides me in sobriety. The rhythm of the universe, of life, of my Higher Power has replaced the ersatz tempo I used to seek in ethanol based liquids.

Among the many blessings sobriety has brought into my life is the gift of learning how to fly an airplane. Friends ask how I remain calm and unafraid, especially in turbulence and when landing. My answer is "trust"—in the plane, in my instructor, in myself, and in my Higher Power who ensures everything will be okay. A trust in my newfound tempo.

I write poetry. Many poems describe life before and after my sobriety date.

This is my beginning...



Acceptance

"And acceptance is the answer to all my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing, situation—Some fact of my life—unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment.

Nothing, absolutely nothing happens in God's world by mistake.

Until I could accept my alcoholism, I could not stay sober; Unless I accept life completely on life's terms, I cannot be happy.

I need to concentrate not so much. On what needs to be changed in the world. As on what needs to be changed in me and in my attitudes."

Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th Edition p. 417

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO...

In accordance with the 7th Tradition and abiding by the group conscience of your home group, you may send contributions in support of Area 29 to:

Maryland General Service Inc.

PO BOX 2651, WESTMINSTER, MD 21158

<http://www.marylandaa.org/contributions/GroupContributions>

<http://www.marylandaa.org/indcont/IndividualContributions>



MARGENSER

Fostering Unity and Carrying the AA Message in Area 29 Maryland General Service

IS YOUR NEWSLETTER

The MARGENSER Committee welcomes submissions. We are here to serve you. Submissions should be no more than 750 words and about service or recovery. Please include your first name, last initial and home group. Email all correspondence to

Margenser@marylandAA.org or mail to

Maryland General Service Inc., PO Box 2651, Westminster, MD 21158

The submission deadline for the next issue is
February 18, 2018



Our Third Legacy of Service

Chuck B.—District 40 GSR

Mason Dixon group

Hello, my name is Chuck and I am an alcoholic. This is my second article for the Margenser and I am so excited to be writing again. I have been asked to contribute on a topic I think is very important to my long-term sobriety, our third legacy of Service.

My service in Alcoholics Anonymous began very early. I had two home groups. My first service position was to gather up cigarette butts accidentally or purposely dropped out front at our church. My sponsor explained the importance of keeping the parking lots and grounds clean so we could keep meeting at this location. I explained to my sponsor why I should not have this position - "I don't even smoke"! My sponsor explained, "I don't care; you want to stay sober, don't you?" So, I did it and, I stayed sober.

My other home group asked if I would be willing to show up early and make coffee. Now, this is an important service position. I "cleared" it with my sponsor, with the understanding I would continue my other commitment. I showed up for my first pot of coffee. I remember making pot after pot and pouring it into the large, yellow urn we had. I vividly remember receiving a compliment "this is the best cup of coffee I have ever drank"! After one year this position rotated and you can imagine my utter shock when I heard "this is the best cup of coffee I have ever drank". I thought I made the best coffee!! I learned how important it is to encourage our newcomers and how I learned humility and ego reduction.

Continuing to work the steps of AA with my sponsor and fulfilling my service positions, it was finally suggested I chair a meeting. I was assured by members of both my home groups. They continued their encouragement by showing their love and support during the meeting. I learned we never have to do anything alone again IF we are willing to ask for help.

After two years of sobriety, my sponsor advised me to volunteer for service below the group level in Alcoholics Anonymous. Of course I asked what this meant. "Why don't you ask your group to be a West Central Intergroup Representative"? For two years, and almost every Wednesday night; I heard what was going on in Districts 40, 41, and 42 and how we could carry the message. Through committee meetings and heated budget discussions, the spirit of love and service accomplished much. An opening for Office Coordinator at WCI surfaced. For one year I was tasked with the responsibility of staffing the office, phone coverage, tracking literature supplies and sales, and the Twelfth Step list was keep current. What a wonderful time for me and the spirit of rotation continues.

I was also fortunate to assist Jim K. with helping to maintain the WCI website he created. My current service position is finishing up my two year commitment as a General Service Representative (GSR). I attended district and area meetings and reported the information back to my group.

I have a feeling I am going to be back in service to WCI and the district very shortly (I have this on good authority)! I would have it no other way. Service work has keep me involved and sober since April 23, 1996, and I am extremely grateful to God and AA.

In Love and Service,
Chuck B



Responsibility Statement

I am responsible...When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there.
And for that: I am responsible.

A Declaration of Unity

This we owe to A.A.'s future:
To place our common welfare first;
To keep our fellowship united.
For on A.A. unity depend our lives,
And the lives of those to come.



Whatever Happened To The Circle And Triangle Symbol . . .

Mark M.

So, whatever happened to the Circle and Triangle symbol we used to see on AA literature? When did A. A. adopt it as their symbol? When did A. A. stop using it? Why did A. A. stop using it? It's featured prominently on all the A.A. books I have from my early sobriety. Alcoholic Anonymous—Big Book 3rd edition, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcohols Anonymous Comes of Age, As Bill Sees It, including Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers and 'Pass it On' which were both published in the early 80's. Anything after the early 90's it's not be seen. Why?

Good questions! For questions like these, a great place to start is the A. A. Grapevine Story Archive. A quick search revealed a Grapevine article from December 1993 titled "Whatever Happened to the Circle and Triangle?" Doesn't get any easier than this, does it?

Our Second International A. A. Convention was held in St. Louis Missouri in July of 1955. A.A.'s 20th anniversary is known as our "Coming of Age" convention. From Alcohols Anonymous Comes of Age on page 139, Bill recounts his words in the final hours to 5,000 attendees:

"Above us floats a banner on which is inscribed the new symbol for AA, a circle enclosing a triangle. The circle stands for the whole world of AA, and the triangle stands for AA's Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service. . . The priests and seers of antiquity regarded the circle enclosing the triangle as a means of warding off spirits of evil, and AA's circle and triangle of Recovery, Unity, and Service has certainly meant all of that to us and much more."

Thus the Circle and Triangle became the symbol of Alcohols Anonymous and would remain so until the early 1990s. A pretty good run I'd say. So, once again, what happened?



Most of us are familiar with so called sobriety chips or medallions. Most of us also know these chips are not produced nor sold by Alcohols Anonymous. Anyone who received chips in the old days, thirty to forty years ago will recall, not only did these chips have the circle and triangle; they even had A.A. stamped in the middle. I still have some myself!

During the 1980s some conscientious A. A. members began to question outside entities using our symbol, which by the way, A. A had registered as such. Alcohols Anonymous World Services, Inc. (AAWS, Inc.) board in 1986, began contacting these outside entities and requested they "cease and desist". From the Grapevine article,

"AAWS implemented this policy with restraint, and did not resort to legal remedies until all attempts at persuasion and conciliation had been unsuccessful. Of about 170 unauthorized users contacted, two suits were filed, and both were settled in the very early stages."

All was well for a time until some of the manufacturers took a second look and decided to contest the AAWS, Inc. board's position. Faced with what would be a legal fight over the use of the circle and triangle, a fight would be difficult if not, impossible to win, the 1993 Conference dropped the Circle and Triangle as our official symbol. Now our Conference approved literature simply states "Alcohols Anonymous World Services, Inc." unaccompanied by the circle and triangle.

The Circle and Triangle has not been "banned," it's just not the official trademark of Alcohols Anonymous any longer. Check out the December 1993 Grapevine article on this for a much more in depth look!
aagrapevine.org



Does Your Group Support Our Fellowship?

Tom M.

Our Seventh Tradition is our guide. "Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." As a group, we have a responsibility and a privilege to support our group and the district, intergroup, area, and GSO that make possible the services we enjoy and that contribute so much to our sobriety.

At the area level, and indeed at the General Service Office (GSO) level, every precious dollar is accounted for. Detailed budgets are presented, debated and voted on. The same process is notably missing at the place where the rubber meets the road—our groups. When was the last time your group treasurer told you what the accounts looked like? Does your group know what a prudent reserve is, or how much it should be? While the General Service Representative (GSR) is generally elected from within the group, the treasurer is often a volunteer. He or she may not receive a turnover, or may not know how to send a contribution to Maryland General Service (MGS), the Intergroup, GSO, or even the local district. Without those contributions, the activities and literature we enjoy are either not possible or are likely to cost more. What can we do to improve the situation?

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Each group is autonomous. This means they are responsible for their own finances. For smaller groups, it may not be possible to send contributions more often than once a quarter, or once a year, after the group pays rent for space, buys supplies such as literature, or paying for the occasional cookies and cake for celebrations. Still, even a small amount can add up over time. Given nearly everyone has access to a tablet or computer, it should be possible to keep track of group funds. Don't just use the "coffee can accounting system."



At the area assemblies, we consistently learn only about forty percent of groups submit contributions. It is understood small groups as mentioned, may not be able to participate as often.

But what about the large groups which consistently see sixty or seventy people every week? If they are not participating, where are the funds going? Carrying a very large balance in their accounts just means fewer resources are available to meet fellowship needs addressed by the district, intergroup and GSO.

Ask your group treasurer for a report at your next group conscience, and have a conversation about priorities. Does your treasurer know your group number? It should be on every check remitted to GSO or MGS (online links below). If your funds are kept in an account which can be accessed on line, they can be remitted digitally, saving postage and paper. Both MGS and GSO now have on-line contributions capabilities. It is easier than ever to participate in the work of the fellowship if we take an interest in what our group is doing. When we put a dollar or two in the basket, we are contributing to the funds which help another soul recover. Let's work together to really make a difference. We can do better. With His help, and our continuing support, we will strengthen our fellowship and reach out to more suffering alcoholics with the message of hope and recovery.

[http://www.marylandaa.org/contributions/Group Contributions](http://www.marylandaa.org/contributions/Group%20Contributions) (Maryland Area Service)

[http://www.marylandaa.org/indcont/Individual contributions](http://www.marylandaa.org/indcont/Individual%20contributions). (Maryland Area Service)

<https://ctb.aaws.org/default.aspx?lang=en> (A.A. Member Contributions Online)



MARYLAND GENERAL SERVICE AREA 29 • 2017–2018 CALENDAR

November 18 Area Committee

Catholic Community of St. Francis Xavier, 1317 Cuba Road, Hunt Valley, MD 21030 (hosted by District 33)

December 2 G.S.R. and D.C.M.—Transition Training (see flyer)

Severna Park United Methodist Church, 731 Benfield Boulevard, Severna Park, MD (Presented by Area 29 Workshop Committee and the Area 29 Delegate)

December 9 Area Rotation Assembly

St. Paul Catholic Church, 3755 St. Paul Street Ellicott City, MD 21043 (hosted by Districts 37 & 41) (parking entrance is on St. Paul Place off of College Ave.)

January 27 Panel 68 Committee Planning Meeting

Severna Park United Methodist Church, 731 Benfield Road, Severna Park, MD 21146

February 17 Area Committee

(8:30 am orientation for new GSRs & DCMs)

Location TBA

February 23-25 Northeast Regional A.A. Service Assembly 2018

(NERAASA) Area 11, Cromwell, CT

March 9-11 Northeast Regional Delegates (NERD)

Tarrytown, NY (Delegates/Alt. Delegates and Past Delegates only)

March 17 Area Assembly/MGS, Inc. Annual Meeting

(8:30 orientation for new GSRs & DCMs) Severna Park United Methodist Church, 731 Benfield Road, Severna Park, MD 21146

April 7 Area 29 Mini-Conference (All are invited)

Severna Park United Methodist Church, 731 Benfield Road, Severna Park, MD 21146

April 22-28 68th General Service Conference

"A.A.—A Solution for All Generations"—New York, NY (Area 29 Delegate & other Conference members only)

May 19 Area 29 Delegate Report-Back Assembly

(8:30 orientation for new GSRs & DCMs) Severna Park United Methodist Church, 731 Benfield Road, Severna Park, MD 21146

June 1-3 48th Area 29 Maryland State Convention (tentative)

July 21 Area Committee

(8:30 am orientation for new GSRs & DCMs)

Location TBA

August 18 Area Assembly

(8:30 am orientation for new GSRs & DCMs) Severna Park United Methodist Church, 731 Benfield Road, Severna Park, MD 21146

September 22 Area Committee

(8:30 am orientation for new GSRs & DCMs)

Location TBA

October 20 Area Inventory Assembly

(8:30 am orientation for new GSRs & DCMs) Severna Park United Methodist Church, 731 Benfield Road, Severna Park, MD 21146

November 10 Area Committee

(8:30 am orientation for new GSRs & DCMs)

Location TBA

December 8 Area Assembly

(8:30 am orientation for new GSRs & DCMs), Severna Park United Methodist Church, 731 Benfield Road, Severna Park, MD 21146



Principles Before Posting

Terry P., Area 29 Webmaster

Alcoholics Anonymous began with one drunk communicating his story to another. The cornerstone of this program, communicating the message of recovery, is intertwined within our thirty-six principles and takes a variety of forms as we practice the three legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service in our daily lives.

Bill W. wrote, "Public information takes many forms – the simple sign outside a meeting place that says 'A. A. meeting tonight;' listing in local phone directories; distribution of A. A. literature; and radio and television shows using sophisticated media techniques. Whatever the form, it comes down to 'one drunk carrying the message to another drunk,' whether through personal contact or through the use of third parties and the media." Indeed, communication is so fundamental to the survival of our fellowship, that the A. A. Service Manual states, "Keeping a balance between ultimate authority and responsibility and the active, day-to-day functioning of world services means there must be constant communication among all elements of the structure."

But, Bill and Bob, and the many trusted servants of the General Service Conference prior to the birth of the internet, probably could never imagine the sophistication and complexity, in which global and personal communication would evolve to. In fact, we live in an age in which the communication technologies are continuing to evolve much faster than most of us can keep pace. So, does this mean our principles are not a match for this new wellspring of communication? Will technology outpace the functionality of A. A., making our form of recovery obsolete? Or will we bring about the demise of the program, merely due to our own inability to adapt our traditions to the world wide web? Again to quote Bill, speaking on the topic of Anonymity in *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*,

"In my belief, the entire future of our fellowship hangs upon this vital principle. If we continue to be filled with the spirit and practice of anonymity, no shoal or reef can wreck us. If we forget this principle, the lid to Pandora's box will be off and the spirits of Money, Power, and Prestige will be loosed among us. . . . I am positive that A. A.'s anonymity is the key to long-time survival."

So, Anonymity is the key to protecting us from these perils of technology. But how do we do this in the face of technology which is rapidly evolving, extraordinarily complex, and mostly is proprietary in nature? Meaning, we do not and will not likely know how and what it does exactly.

My task is to protect data in which I post about myself and people I know. Sounds straightforward but not so easy a task. This is why we have to remain diligent in our use of the traditions, and how they apply to the internet. We, as a fellowship should continue to strive to understand these technologies and communicate our principles and best practices to each other. Our trusted servants are continuing to do this through the General Service Conference and General Service Office (GSO) in New York. We have helpful resources at AA.ORG such as, MG-18 - A. A. Guidelines on Internet and SMF-197 - Anonymity Online, additionally the principles laid out in the Alcoholics Anonymous - Big Book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age and the pamphlet P-47 - Understanding Anonymity. We are having workshops and a variety of forums, such as the North East Regional A. A. Service Assembly (NERAASA), the North East Regional Forum (NERF), our State Convention and importantly, our Conference Agenda Review Committees (CARCs) and Mini Conference in which we can participate in the process of applying these principles.

What about some practical steps which we can take to practice anonymity online and protect this spiritual principle of our program. Again I would turn to the literature and guidelines which we have through the GSO. Referring to SMF-197 - Anonymity Online and MG-18 - A. A. Guidelines on Internet, they remind me, "The 2013 General Service Conference affirmed . . . that the Internet, social media and all forms of public communications are implicit in the last phrase of the Short Form of Tradition Eleven, which reads: ' . . . at the level of press, radio and films.'" These service pieces provide some general principles for posting in public, such as, we refrain from showing our faces and revealing our last names. We are personally responsible for our own anonymity and must protect that of other AA members whom we may be communicating with or about in digital media. As members of AA become connected in public media, we need to remember a personal anonymity break online, likely breaks the anonymity of our fellow AA's. Quote from pamphlet SMF-197 - Anonymity Online, "Experience suggests that it is in keeping with the Eleventh Tradition not to disclose A. A. membership on social networking sites as well as on any other website, blog, electronic bulletin board, etc., that is not composed solely of A. A. members and not password protected, or is accessible to the public."

These guidelines go on to state, while there are mechanisms in some social media platforms to create private or hidden groups, we have to stay informed of their privacy policies and remember these policies can be changed at a moment's notice. Further though, there are no authorities in A. A., and while the GSO puts out guidelines, each group is autonomous and should make decisions by a well informed group conscience, keeping our traditions in mind.





G.S.R. and D.C.M. Transition Training



Presented by the Area 29 Workshop Committee
and the Area 29 Delegate

Saturday, December 2, 2017
8:30 am to 12:30 pm
Severna Park United Methodist Church
731 Benfield Boulevard
Severna Park, MD.

All incoming and outgoing D.C.M.s and Alt D.C.M.s, G.S.R.s and Alt G.S.R.s should plan to attend. Outgoing trusted servants have valuable information to share, so your participation is encouraged.

Learn everything you ever wanted to know about serving at the District Committee level. If you are a newly elected D.C.M., G.S.R. or Alternate or are thinking about standing...this is your opportunity to ask questions and receive a Workbook with lots of "tools" to assist you in performing your service position more easily!

Refreshments will be served!

For More Information Contact: workshop@marylandaa.org
delegate@marylandaa.org

MARGENSER STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Area 29 MARGENSER newsletter is published to foster unity and facilitate communication among AA members, groups, districts, and intergroups within the Maryland General Service Area. The MARGENSER aims to be instrumental in carrying the AA message. This quarterly newsletter seeks to publish AA-related material, including personal stories of experience, strength, and hope. Material will be reviewed by the MARGENSER committee chairperson or by a member of the committee. Nothing published in the MARGENSER should be thought of as a statement of Area 29 or AA policy. Finally, publication shall not constitute endorsement by the newsletter itself, Area 29, intergroups, districts, local groups, or AA as a whole.



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PO Box 2651, Westminster, MD 21158

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