

# MARGENSER

Fostering Unity and Carrying the A.A. Message in Area 29 MARYLAND GENERAL SERVICE

## My Final Trip to the General Service Conference

*Nancy B, Panel 60 Delegate, Area 29*

I currently serve as your Panel 60 Delegate. It is an honor and privilege to attend the General Service Conference of A.A. each of the two years I serve you. The 61st Annual General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous took place May 1 through May 7 at the Crowne Plaza Times Square on Broadway in New York City. The theme of the Conference was “We are Responsible for A.A.’s Future – Let It Begin with Us”

On Saturday, April 30, I left my house early and drove to Hackensack, N.J. to the home of GSO Staff member, Gayle S. who had graciously offered me a ride into the city. Her husband Ralph drove us to the hotel, dropped us off with our luggage, drove home to Hackensack and caught a bus back into the city to join Gayle for the beginning of the week. Talk about going to any length!

There were 135 voting members at the Conference this year, including delegates (93), trustees, directors, GSO Staff and Grapevine Staff.

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## The Twelve Concepts – A Précis Form?

*Bob C, Area 29 Treasurer*

In 12th grade English, I thought we were home free when our teacher assigned a précis, “a concise summary” of an assigned piece of literature, for the week’s writing assignment. Piece of cake, I thought – until she stipulated that “concise” means “brief in form but comprehensive in scope,” and that our précis could not exceed 25 words, yet must cover every thought in the piece of literature we were summarizing. At week’s end, I gratefully took my C-minus and concluded the fine arts were not for me.

Flash forward several decades: Happily and gratefully, I have found A.A.’s Twelve Concepts to become useful in the service, professional and personal aspects of my life. However, the ability to readily call them to mind to use as tools to solve problems, like we do with the Steps and Traditions, has often eluded me (especially with the last seven!). Perhaps this is because the Concepts actually embody sets of related principles, so they seem more complex. Another way to put it, at least for me, is that the Concepts are just so long.

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## Why Do Service Work?

*John H, Intergroup Council Chair, Northeastern MD Intergroup*

Does anyone other than me remember thinking “If I’m not drinking what am I going to do with all my free time”?

Somewhere around my mid teens I discovered my solution to life; my good friend Chris H. always says “a solution was his solution”. Alcohol was my answer to everything, and as a result it was how I filled all of my “free time”. Though I still had many “yets” when I came to A.A. I only had one compelling relationship; me and booze, till death do us part. Don’t get me wrong, I had people in my life that I loved and who loved me, but they were usually the focus of my dis-ease more than my love.

My first true sponsor, Joe C., dragged me to a commitment when I was about seven months dry. I wanted to know what words of wisdom I should share with these poor folks, he told me that since I’d not had a drink in seven months maybe I could tell them how I’d done that. Joe always kept it simple, he taught me early on that there was only one reason to take a commitment;

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## 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.

## 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 that were convenient for me. I wanted the chairperson to select a topic that addressed the Step or dilemma that 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 that addressed the alcoholic thinking and behavior that I perceived was my problem of the day.

Attention to our common welfare describes mature actions that 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 that 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 that 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 that 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 member of Alcoholics Anonymous to share their experience strength, and hope, this assures that 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 that seem 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.

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 that require that their personal ambitions and opinions be placed aside in order to ensure that the common welfare of A.A. comes first.

As we begin to review the work of the 61st General Service Conference, I am hopeful that 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". ▲

## Big Book Bits - Part 1

Ron M, BYOL Easton

*Over the course of my journey in Alcoholics Anonymous, I have always been fascinated with its history and as a result acquired a large amount of material which led to the development of a workshop revolving around the evolution of the Big Book. It is the intention of the writer to present portions of the presentation in a series of articles for the MARGENSER. Comments and/or questions are welcome at rule62-@live.com.*

After a few tough early years, Bill started writing the Big Book around March or April 1938. Working with Bill was Hank P. Hank was the first man Bill was successful in sobering up after returning from his famous trip to Akron where he and Dr. Bob formulated the first efforts to what today is known as Alcoholics Anonymous. Hank's original date of sobriety was October or November 1935. Hank was a salesman, an agnostic and a former Standard Oil of New Jersey executive who had lost his job because of drinking. Hank had a small business, Honor Dealers, in Newark, New Jersey. For a time Bill W. and Jim B. ("The Vicious Cycle"), worked there selling polish and Bill W. dictated most of the Big Book in that office to his secretary Ruth Hock. While Bill was busy writing Hank was in the process of establishing Works Publishing Company which would be the original vehicle putting the Big Book on the market.

Ruth Hock is quoted as saying the Big Book would not have been written without Bill and would not have been published without Hank.

Within a short time friction developed between Bill and Hank. While Bill did the writing, Hank set up the company with himself

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*(Delegates Corner) continued from page 1...*

The average age of the delegates was 55, the oldest was 75 and the youngest, 34. The average length of sobriety was 19 years and shortest, 7 years. The longest length of service was 28 years and the shortest, 5 years.

Monday through Friday of the Conference week begins with the G.S.C. Serenity Group A.A. meeting at 7:30 am. I spent my time each morning having a very light breakfast in my room and doing my personal prayers, meditation, and organization for the day.

Sunday morning we registered and picked up our Conference packets. The opening session began at 10am with roll call as each of the 93 delegates to the Conference stood and said "here" or "present". Our Conference week had begun.

Sunday afternoon the Conference Committees met jointly with their Trustees' Committee for one hour to hear what had taken place over the year and to ask questions. After a period of rest and preparation, we attended the Opening Dinner and A.A. meeting. Area 29 Alternate Delegate, Linda J. attended the dinner as my guest and Past Delegate, Morgan J. attended as the guest of Area 13 Delegate, Frank Z. The room was a buzz of activity as old and new friends met to enjoy a meal and hear sharing from 5 Conference members.

Monday morning all Conference Committees met for three hours to begin their work. I serve on the Conference Finance Committee where we got to discuss the pie charts again and, of course, self support.

Monday afternoon we entered the main meeting room, now set up for the general sessions of the Conference with the familiar long, narrow tables covered with cloth. Translators, visitors from Venezuela and Great Britain, Trustees Emeriti and some GSO staff members sat along the back wall, a white placard marking their space.

We heard reports from the General Service Board, A.A.W.S. Board, the Grapevine Board and the Trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee. The contents of these reports will be published in the Final Conference Report which will be available by the end of the summer. Anyone wishing to read these reports

now is welcome to contact me.

Class A (non-Alcoholic) Trustee and General Service Board Treasurer, Terry Bedient gave a finance presentation which includes useful charts and graphs. Per the report given, an annual contribution of only \$6.29 per member or \$137.45 per group in 2010 would have allowed GSO Services to be fully self-supporting from contributions, thereby lowering the cost of our literature. This information, plus comparisons for previous years, is available on [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) under the Finance tab and can be useful when discussing the 7th Tradition in your home groups or districts.

Conference Committees met again on Tuesday to complete their work. Many, including the Conference Finance Committee, worked through lunch. Some scheduled time to continue meeting while others took the subway trip to the General Service Office to enjoy the tour, desserts and picture taking with the GSO Staff.

With the exception of the Delegate's Dinner and two Regional lunches, we met for lunch and dinner with all members of the Conference. At each meal we would sit with different people allowing us to meet and have conversations with other delegates, trustees, GSO staff members, directors and visitors from other countries. This was not a time to discuss Conference Agenda Items, but a time to get to know each other and share how we carry the message in our areas.

At breaks we had the opportunity to visit the extensive Literature and Grapevine displays. Most of the 60+ translated volumes of the Big Book were available to view, and they filled a whole table.

Wednesday was a busy day for me and for the North East Region. In the morning I moderated one of the ten conference workshops on "How to Increase Participation in A.A. – Striving for Self-Support in All Our Affairs". The results of the sharing will be included in the Final Conference Report available later this summer.

At the second North East Regional Delegate lunch we heard presentations from three areas bidding on the 2014 NERAASA. The winning bid went to Area 61, Rhode

Island, which has never hosted this event. Area 29 won the bid to host an additional North East Regional Forum in 2014. We will hold it at the Double Tree Hotel and Conference Center at BWI in June of 2014.

After lunch, the election of the North East Regional Trustee (NERT) took place at the general session. I am pleased to announce that J. Gary L. from Bethlehem, PA was elected on the fourth ballot.

Wednesday afternoon began the Conference Committee reports and discussion which ended, after a break for dinner, at 11:00 pm. A group of 18 die-hards traipsed across Broadway to the Stardust for ice cream. Being exhausted, we still mustered up the energy to sing and eat too much sugar...after all it is a Conference tradition!

Conference Committee reports resumed Thursday morning and afternoon. In the evening, after presentations on "Alcoholics Anonymous in a Digital Age", the session ended at 10:00 pm.

Friday morning we met for our final day of reports and discussion. There didn't appear to be too many Floor Actions presented so we were hopeful that the session would end as scheduled at 3:00 pm. That was not to be the case. Even though we did not beat the still-standing record of the 59th General Service Conference which ended after 2:00 am, we continued working through dinner until 7:10 pm when all discussion had been exhausted and all votes had been taken. Farewells by rotating Panel 60 delegates and closing remarks by the Chair of the General Service Board ended at 9:30 pm with the Serenity Prayer in English, French and Spanish.

Dinner was on our own and about 20 of us made our way across Broadway again, with lighter minds and empty bellies, to have dinner and talk about everything BUT the actions of the Conference.

Saturday morning was a time for tearful farewells at the closing brunch as we said good-bye to our new and old friends. Our own John K., North East Regional Trustee who served us for the past four years, gave a

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## Anonymity

Ron M, BYOL Easton

Since the very beginning of our program of recovery, anonymity has been the subject of long and sometimes divisive discussion. It is well documented that Bill himself fell prey to the easier softer road of public notoriety in the early years and in his own writings describes some of his early activities being on the road happily doing personal interviews and pictures. He readily admits that for two or three years he was A.A.'s number one anonymity breaker. Since Bill was blatantly breaking anonymity others soon joined the parade openly stating that they were exceptions since they had something special and different to offer and therefore should be exempt from the anonymity requirement. Bill was even accused of attempting to grab the spotlight away from Dr. Bob or even worse was the possibility that Bill would get drunk and the whole program would fail, thereby tainting and possibly destroying the common good.

Over the years anonymity has been one A.A.'s most valuable traditions and assets, in spite of the numerous breeches along the way. It seems that there is a never ending list of excuses or reasons that would exempt some person or situation from complying with this

most valuable and precious tradition. Among all of the reasons put forth there always seems to be some underlying rationalization and self justification.

Constant and eternal vigilance is necessary to protect the anonymity of all members of Alcoholics Anonymous. The often asked casual question in group settings such as where do you know him or her from? A careful and neutral answer is always necessary to protect everyone's anonymity.

We go to great lengths to insure newcomers of our tradition of anonymity in order to convey the idea that A.A. meetings are safe havens. When details of sharing seem to leak out of the rooms those affected are often driven away. Constant vigilance of everyone concerned is a necessity.

Take for example, the hypothetical situation where a person or persons are testifying in court, either for themselves or others, and in order to infer or degrade the character of various parties, membership in Alcoholics Anonymous is used during interrogation in an effort to insinuate the inadequacy or incompetence of the parties present. This would appear to be an obvious breach of anonymity and is even more blatant if counsel is aware of this tradition and chooses to rationalize the situation.

*(Service Work...) continued from page 1...*

so that I'd increase my odds of not drinking. Every commitment I've been part of, all of the service work I've participated in, have been 100% successful; I believe that because I'm still sober.

As a result of that sobriety and service work, my life is very full (busy). Quite often I have no desire to fulfill my service commitment, I can usually think of something I'd rather do, someplace I'd rather be. But Joe thought me that once I made the commitment there really wasn't a choice any longer. Some of the greatest gifts of sobriety have come as a result of showing up places I didn't necessarily want to be, doing things for others that I didn't always want to do. The first, is that I haven't found it necessary to take a drink of alcohol since I "immersed myself in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous" (Joes words again). Second, my life has never been so rich and full, I have many healthy relationships with people throughout my life, I love and am loved. And last, when I get to the commitment, nine out of ten times I find I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be, surrounded by the "We" that God had in mind when Bill wrote our steps.

The twelfth Step states that "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs." Is it your turn to be of service to yourself? 

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## THE MARGENSER 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](mailto:Margenser@marylandAA.org) or mail to Maryland General Services, P.O. Box 701, New Market, MD 21774. The submission deadline for the next issue is August 15, 2011.

## REACHING OUT TO THE "DARK 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.

## 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.  
P.O. Box 701  
New Market, MD 21774

## Concept I

Pat H, District 10

The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for A.A. World services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

What does this mean to you?

Bill knew that he and Dr. Bob would not live forever. What would providence bring to our society? Who would be in charge? How would our Fellowship withstand the test of time? Concept I is the answer. Bill, in his wisdom, conferred the responsibility to the whole Fellowship which means the groups. In the first paragraph of Concept I Bill writes: "The groups assumed that responsibility at the St. Louis International Convention of 1955. There, on behalf of Dr. Bob, the Trustees and A.A.'s old time leaders, I made the transfer of world service responsibility to our entire Fellowship."

In my own home group, there are questions of "politics" in relation to General Services. Nothing could be further from the truth. Yes, we do work in a democratic way and that in itself sniffs of politics, but it's really not. If you have ever been to an area assembly and witnessed the passion of love for our Fellowship, more than likely you came away with a feeling of enlightenment, a sense of security in the continuance of our groups, officers, trustees and everyone concerned with carrying the message of hope to the still suffering alcoholic. You have witnessed the various committees at work, such as Public Information whose job it is to get the word out to the public in an attractive way as to what our Fellowship is all about; Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) Committee which gathers people together to carry the message of hope to corporations, doctors, nurses, students and teachers, letting them know what we are about; Audio, Corrections, Finance, Grapevine, Intergroup Liaison, Literature, Margenser, Registrar, Special Needs Treatment Facilities, Website and Workshop committees. To see these dedicated people at work, giving of their time is something every A.A. member should see. It is inspiring to say the least.

And so it begins at the level of our home groups, the trembling hand rising within the group conscience meeting to volunteer to be the groups' General Service Representative; trembling because he or she is taking a leap into the unknown. To paraphrase from the Big Book: "This is an experience you must not

miss. We know you will not want to miss it."

In ending, let me quote the last paragraph on Concept I: "Therefore we believe that we see in our Fellowship a spiritualized society characterized by enough enlightenment, enough responsibility and enough love of man and of God to insure that our democracy of world service will work under all conditions. We are confident that we can rely upon Tradition Two, our group conscience and its trusted servants. Hence it is with a sense of great security that we old-timers have now fully vested in A.A.'s General Service conference the authority for giving shape – through the labors of its chosen Delegates, Trustees, and service workers – to the destiny that we trust God in His wisdom is holding in store for all of us." ▲

*(Service Work...) continued from page 1...*

In many A.A. meetings during the opening remarks the statement of "What You Hear Here, Who You See Here, When You Leave Here, and Let It Stay Here" is used to emphasize the anonymity and privacy of those present. Again, how many of us are guilty of idle conversation outside the meeting rooms, of repeating and/or utilizing information gleaned from comments heard in the meetings for later use against the member sharing, obviously a violation and intrusion into the privacy of the members in the meeting not to mention violating A.A.'s tradition twelve, "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities". Would it now be necessary to inaugurate another statement at the beginning of all meetings advising everyone to be careful and not say anything they would not want to be repeated in a public venue? I would hope not.

In my office above my desk hangs a framed letter entitled "Bill's Last Message". In it he is asked which blessing he feels was most responsible for our growth as a fellowship and most vital to our community, he replied the "Concept of Anonymity". In another section of the letter he continues "that on the practical level, anonymity has brought protection for the newcomer, respect and support of the world outside, and security from those of us who would use A.A. for sick and selfish reasons.

Self serving anonymity violations cannot and should not be tolerated. No excuses. ▲

*Big Book Bits...) continued from page 2...*

as President and as a for profit corporation which Bill did not agree with. There were other problems that surfaced. Money continued to be in short supply and Hank decided to divorce his wife Kathleen and marry Ruth. That never happened. When Bill moved the operation to New York, away from Honor Dealers, Ruth went along to the consternation of Hank. In order to tone things down Hank was paid \$200.00 for the office furniture he claimed was his and in return he gave up his stock in Works Publishing Company, as all the others had done, including Bill.

From time to time small items surfaced regarding Hank which are presented here for the purposes of information only since he played such a large and valuable part of the early history regarding the development and printing of the Big Book. From the writings of Lois it is known that Hank started drinking again and drifted in and out of the A.A. program but never stayed. He died in Trenton N.J. after a long illness on January 18, 1954 at the age of 57. His story appears in all printings of the 1st edition entitled "The Unbeliever". Another very interesting fact regarding Hank, besides his business efforts with Works Publishing, is his little known literary donation to the writing of the Big Book. The major portion of the Big Book was in fact written by Bill however, there are a few parts which must be credited to others. Hank is one of these people. In my research and discoveries regarding the Big Book, the fact that, with the exception of the opening paragraph, Hank wrote the remaining portion of the chapter "To Employers".

Along the way Works Publishing Company became Works Publishing Incorporated. A total of 600 shares were issued with Bill and Hank each getting 200 shares apiece. For those further interested, I have copies of the original business plan that was prepared and distributed in order to sell the remaining shares. In 1940 the A.A. Foundation took over Works Publishing Inc. and paid off the investor shareholders and therefore became the owners of the Big Book.

As the book was being written, Harper magazine offered a monetary advance to the fledgling, as yet unnamed, group of alcoholics with the understanding that they would ultimately be the owners of the finished product. Although funds were in very short supply, it was decided to forge ahead and retain ownership. Bill and others continued to write and Ruth Hock, Bill's secretary, did the typing for no pay or for what was then, worthless stock certificates.

-To Be Continued- ▲

*(Twelve Concepts...) continued from page 1...*

Recently, in a non-affiliated group studying A.A. and Al-Anon's Traditions and Concepts, I recalled the old précis assignment when I first saw Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service. Using A.A.'s Long and Short Forms as a pattern, and seeing no need to change any of the principles, Al-Anon was able to distill A.A.'s Twelve Concepts into a concise summary that would likely would have earned one of my English teacher's rare A's.

Since then, whenever I become confused or feel daunted thinking of our own Concepts, I find that referring to Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts as an adjunct tool provides a quick clarification. Of course, Al-Anon's Concepts are not A.A. Conference Approved Literature, and some A.A.'s may be troubled by a seeming "endorsement" of an "outside" entity. If that is your concern, please check

out page 121 of our Big Book, where A.A. freely lists Al-Anon's contact information. This is simply a referral to a briefer document that expresses, "briefly in form, but comprehensively in scope," the same principles embodied in greater detail in A.A.'s Concepts, which comprise the parent document. The shorter the form, the more general the coverage; the longer the form, the more specifics and examples; and beyond that, Bill's essays in The Twelve Concepts for World Service lay out all the details, with stories about how the Concepts came to be and have been used.

A side-by-side comparison of A.A.'s and Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts is given below, with the hope that it will aid in the general use of A.A.'s Concepts as it has done for me.

**A.A.: THE TWELVE CONCEPTS FOR WORLD SERVICE (SHORT FORM)**  
**AL-ANON: THE TWELVE CONCEPTS OF SERVICE**

I. Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship. 1. The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups.

II. The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole society in its world affairs. 2. The Al-Anon Family Groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to their Conference and its service arms.

III. To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A.—the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives—with a traditional "Right of Decision." 3. The right of decision makes

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## MARYLAND GENERAL SERVICE, AREA 29 2011 CALENDAR

Area Committee	July 9	District 34
Area Assembly	August 13	District 7
Area Committee	September 24	District 28/29
Area Assembly (Elections)	October 22	District 40
Fall Conference	Oct. 27-30	Hagerstown, MD
Area Committee	November 12	TBA
Area Assembly (Rotation)	December 10	District 31, Annapolis

(Twelve Concepts...) continued from page 6...

effective leadership possible.

IV. At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge. 4. Participation is the key to harmony.

V. Throughout our structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration. 5. The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and insure that they be heard.

VI. The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board. 6. The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees.

VII. The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness. 7. The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional.

VIII. The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of over-all policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities. 8. The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of Al-Anon Headquarters to its executive committees.

IX. Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees. 9. Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership.

X. Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined. 10. Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority and double-headed

management is avoided.

XI. The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern. 11. The World Service Office is composed of selected committees, executives and staff members.

XII. General Warranties of the Conference: 12. General Warranties:

1. The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; In all proceedings the World Service Conference of Al-Anon shall observe the spirit of the Traditions:

2. that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; 1. that only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle;

3. that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; 2. that no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members;

4. that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, substantial unanimity; 3. that all decisions be reached by discussion vote and whenever possible by unanimity;

5. that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; 4. that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy;

6. that it never perform acts of government; that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action. 5. that though the Conference serves Al-Anon it shall never perform any act of government; and that like the fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups which it serves, it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.

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(Delegates Corner) continued from page 3...

very emotional farewell full of memories and heartfelt gratitude. I share with you the ending from John's talk which also expresses my gratitude for this final opportunity to serve as your delegate at the General Service Conference.

"You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains; you raise me up, to walk on stormy seas; I am strong when I am on your shoulders; you raise me up...to more than I can be."

Thank you for the opportunity to serve Area 29!

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### Highlights of 2011 Conference Advisory Actions

- The theme for the 2012 Conference will be "Anonymity: Our Spiritual Responsibility in the Digital Age".
- An additional blank pie chart and text will be added to the pamphlet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix"
- A.A. Grapevine will be permitted to utilize digital channels and current (commissionable) support and distribution technologies like smart phones, tablets, eReaders, applications and commissioned online stores for the sale and distribution of magazines, books and products.
- The trustees' literature committee will continue to develop literature which focuses on spirituality which includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are sober in A.A.
- The 2011 A.A. Membership Survey will be conducted by area on a random basis.
- The recovery pamphlet "A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs" was approved.
- The revised pamphlet, "The A.A. Member-Medications and Other Drugs" was approved. ▲

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