

# MARGENSER

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

## Preview of the 2013 General Service Conference

Bob C., Area 29 Delegate

Accurately forecasting a Maryland snowstorm in March is probably easier than accurately previewing the General Service Conference! Just like with an area assembly or a home group meeting, anything can happen at the Conference. So, to keep the groups informed and to solicit your feedback (not as an attempt to look into a crystal ball!), here are some salient 2013 Conference topics:

A proposed plan regarding the slate of directors for the A.A.W.S. Board and the A.A. Grapevine Board: The General Service Board (G.S.B.) has proposed a plan to double the membership of the Grapevine and A.A.W.S. Boards of Directors to 17 members on both boards. The boards would not merge, but they would each be populated by the same 17 people, instead of the current arrangement of eight or nine different people on each board. The aim is to solve the corporate communication/cooperation problem without affecting the fellowship or our Traditions or Concepts, and to free up the G.S.B. for strategic planning. Negatives include the possibly unwieldy nature of two 17-member boards, fewer service positions if the boards are shrunk in the future, and increased time commitments for trustees and non-trustee directors. The item is before the Trustees' Conference Committee which will decide whether to forward it to the

entire Conference. (All Conference Committees are composed of delegates.) Fourteen additional "practice" changes, which aim to increase efficiency at the corporate level, have already been approved by the trustees and don't need Conference approval.

A draft pamphlet that focuses on spirituality is on the agenda for the Conference Committee on Literature. The draft likely includes stories from alcoholics who are atheists and agnostics. Some members like this proposal, and others oppose it. Both sides offer multiple reasons for their positions. The pamphlet's title hasn't been determined, but one suggestion is, "Spiritual, not Religious."

The possible addition of an index to the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous will also be considered by the Conference Committee on Literature. Some folks like this idea, as many non-Conference approved Big Book indices are offered by on-line vendors. Others disapprove, saying a topical index would encourage newcomers to read the Big Book "cafeteria style" rather than cover to cover. The cost increase would depend on the size of the index.

Changing the deadline for submission of Conference Agenda Items from January 15th to December 15th will be

*continued on page 2...*

### 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.

### Table of Contents...

<i>Preview of the 2013 General Service Conference</i>	...1	<i>Remembering the 857 Club</i>	...6
<i>Trudging Along</i>	...2	<i>Traditions, Traditions, Wherefore Art Thou?</i>	...6
<i>General Service Matters</i>	...3	<i>Maryland General Service 2012 Calendar</i>	...7
<i>Rotation Benefits the Whole</i>	...4	<i>Reaching out to "Dark Districts"</i>	...7
<i>AAWS Services</i>	...5	<i>Change of Address Form</i>	...8

*(Trudging Along) continued from page 1...*

considered by the Conference Committee on Policy and Admissions. Conference approval would allow more time for G.S.O. and Grapevine to assemble background material before January Board Weekend when the final agenda is set. However, many area assemblies don't meet until mid-December, so concern about a "calendar crunch" exists at that level.

A request from A.A.W.S. for permission to commission online stores to sell and distribute digital A.A. literature will be considered by the Conference Public Information Committee. This would allow A.A.W.S. to sell electronic Conference-approved books through third-party vendors like the Grapevine does now. Concerns include the "anonymity issue" and vendor recommendations of "outside literature" after customers view our literature. Pros include making the Big Book and other A.A. literature available on all platforms and effectively exercising A.A.'s spiritual and economic ownership of its literature.

Addition of the terms "Advisory Action" and "Additional Committee Consideration" to the Glossary of General Service Terms in The A.A. Service Manual will be considered by the Conference Report and Charter Committee. This agenda item was suggested by a Maryland Regional Panel and approved by Area 29's

Assembly last year. Interestingly, Additional Considerations aren't mentioned in the service manual at this time.

A proposal to publish a commemorative "75th Anniversary Edition" of the First Edition, First Printing of Alcoholics Anonymous, true to the original in all publication specifications, will be considered by the Conference Committee on Archives. Cost would be ~ \$15, priced competitively with vendors of "replica" first editions. While some net profit is expected, the primary purpose is to state to the fellowship and the world that "this is our founding literature." Availability would be from April, 2014 to the close of the 2015 International Convention.

The current requirement for the format of La Viña (68 pages, perfect bound) will be considered for removal by the Grapevine Conference Committee. If the removal is approved by the Conference, the Grapevine Board would be free to change the format. Arguments for removal include: (a) an improvement in "spiritual parity" because no such restrictions apply to the Grapevine; and (b) La Viña lost ~ \$115,000 last year. Cons include La Viña's 2012 subscription increase of over 8%, which may or may not be related to the formatting upgrade.

The G.S.B., A.A.W.S. and Grapevine financial reports aren't Agenda Items but will be presented and discussed and

are of importance to our groups. The 2013 A.A.W.S. budget anticipates a \$600,000 loss. If realized, this would be covered by drawdowns from the G.S.B. reserve fund or "savings account." The deficit budget was approved because costs have been cut as far as currently possible without policy changes (which continue to be considered) and because the trustees think it's wrong to increase literature prices with 11.3 months of cash flow in the reserve fund. Contributions from the 57% of groups that currently don't participate are needed to prevent price increases in 2014 or 2015.

In 2012, the A.A. Grapevine realized a \$257,000 profit (preliminary report). Due to continued subscriptions declines, Grapevine is budgeting for an \$11,000 profit in 2013 and forecasts a deficit in 2014 without additional changes. Ongoing Grapevine/G.S.O. projects in resource sharing and efficiency should affect that picture somewhat. As a 2013 Grapevine Conference Committee member, your delegate needs your ideas on what changes in the Grapevine magazine would make it more attractive to you.

Please e-mail your delegate at [delegate@marylandaa.org](mailto:delegate@marylandaa.org) before the Conference begins on April 21 and give me your thoughts on any topic mentioned here, either on or off the agenda. And thank you for "being responsible!" 🍷

## Trudging Along

By Ron M. Area 29 Alternate Delegate

In the last Margenser, discussion revolved around the setting up and operation of Area 29 Regional Panels. Every two years the topics assigned to the panels are changed in order to provide some variety and new challenges to the different panels. That was done prior to the receipt of the proposed General Service Conference Agenda which was distributed to the panel leaders. During the February Area 29 meeting, time was provided to the panel members to briefly meet and set their schedules. Dates and times were set, the majority of which

were in March. Most of the meetings were set early in the month with a few meetings toward the end in the event they were necessary to wrap up the work. By the time this newsletter is published all of the panels will have met at least once and some will have completed their assignments. Shortly after the Area 29 February meeting the complete conference agenda was received by the delegate by way of a CD, the specific agenda topics were then transferred to individual discs and sent to the panel leaders who in turn printed the

necessary copies for their panel members to use during their meetings. Although the delegate and alternate aspire to attend each and every panel meeting, life gets in the way and conflicts in scheduling occurred to prevent the best laid plans. Just to help with the full schedule of this project Area 29 was host to the NERD (North East Regional Delegate) meeting which was held March 8-10 in Linthicum. That weekend Panels 1 and 3 met on Saturday in Chestertown and Bel Air respectively. The delegates from

*continued on page 3...*


*(Trudging Along) continued from page 2...*

other northeastern states were offered the opportunity to visit the meeting panels and see Area 29 in action.

By the end of March all the panel meetings are anticipated to be completed and ready for a report back at the mini conference to be held April 13th in Annapolis at the Salvation Army building 351 Hilltop Lane. At that meeting all six (6) panels will be allotted sufficient time to present their findings and opinions regarding the assigned topics and field questions

from the other attendees of the various panels. This whole process is designed to not only properly prepare the delegate to make informed decisions at the General Service Conference but to also completely inform the members of Area 29 of the current topics under discussion in Alcoholics Anonymous.

This year the General Service Conference will be held in New York City April 20-27. The makeup of the conference includes all 93 area delegates from the United States and Canada, plus others, including trustees,

making a total of 132 people who will deliberate, discuss, and vote on the various agenda issues. By participating in the panels we prepare our delegate representative to bring our group conscience to the table. On May 4th at our Area 29 Assembly we will have an opportunity to hear our delegate "report-back" conference results. Subsequent to this meeting the panels will once again have an opportunity for a wrap up meeting to discuss the outcome of the conference on their assigned agenda items. 

## General Service Matters

*By Don B., Happy Risers Group, Ocean City, MD*

Even though we are already well into the month after the most recent Northeast Regional A.A. Service Assembly (NERAASA), the nearly 1,000 participants who attended the weekend-long event in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, are still feeling quite inspired and motivated to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous back to their home groups. As AA's oldest and largest regional service gathering in the world, NERAASA spanned the course of three days of panel presentations, Q&A, roundtable discussions and report-backs, sharing sessions, Regional Trustee's report, Area highlights, a business meeting, recovery meetings, an A.A. speaker meeting, ask-it basket, sobriety count-down, banquet, and Delegate flag ceremony. Friendships were made or renewed, cooperative ventures were initiated, information and experiences were shared, and new understandings were reached. No one will ever forget the exuberance of our Area 29 Delegate Bob C. during the flag ceremony, as he waved the Maryland flag so vigorously that he snapped the flagpole in two, thus illustrating the words of our co-founder Bill W. when he wrote of "moments sublime with intervals hilarious."

One of the many high points of the weekend was the Northeast Regional Trustee's Report, which included a forecast of A.A.'s financial outlook as well as a thorough explanation of "the Plan" to revitalize the corporate boards of A.A. World Services, Inc. and the A.A. Grapevine, Inc. The many long hours of selfless dedication, creativity, and attention to detail which have gone into the

formulation of "the Plan" are a testament to how seriously our trusted servants take their responsibilities. The presence at NERAASA of a half dozen AAWS and AAGV staff members and directors provided a tangible demonstration of the unity enjoyed by our Fellowship. There is no "us" and "them" in Alcoholics Anonymous; there is only "we" – the collective voice of an informed group conscience expressing the will of a loving God in all our affairs.

With declining print literature sales throughout the publishing industry, as well as the practical reality that business inefficiencies at the A.A. world service level have been pared down to the bone, plus the historical fact that less than half of the groups in Alcoholics Anonymous contribute financially to our General Service Office, it is increasingly apparent that A.A. will be forced to draw down its Reserve Fund this year. If nothing changes, nothing changes. With a \$14 million world service budget, we will either have to cut out many of the services that Alcoholics Anonymous provides or dip into our prudent reserve by an estimated \$600,000. Of course, that is why we have the Reserve Fund in the first place, but to reduce our cushion to only nine months of operating expenses is not by any means the most desirable alternative imaginable.

As our Panel 62 Delegate Bob C. has observed, the issue is not really a money problem; it's a participation problem. Less than 40 percent of the groups in Area 29 contributed to A.A. World Services last year. The trouble is not a lack of generos-

ity on the part of our local members – just look at how much money is spent on anniversary cakes, cards, medallions, and gifts – the shortcoming is a lack of education from our sponsors and communication from our trusted servants.

And that's exactly where you and I come into play. As readers of this newsletter and this article, we are demonstrating our interest and involvement, our commitment to service in, for, and to Alcoholics Anonymous. We are the leaders, the trusted servants, the dedicated home group members of our Fellowship; we are the people responsible to insure that the hand of A.A. will continue to reach out in our general service affairs. We are the individual members who can and must communicate the financial condition of Alcoholics Anonymous world services to our home group members, so that our groups can arrive at a fully-informed group conscience decision on how to proceed.

As with any good communications effort, it would be helpful to develop a prudent action plan. Everything starts with a thorough education – on the Traditions, the Concepts, the service structure, and the spirituality of self-support. Does your home group have an active General Service Representative? Is your GSR involved in the District and in the Area Assembly? Do your group members participate in its Intergroup, in workshops, Regional Panels, and the Area Mini-Conference? Is sponsorship strong in your home group? Service sponsorship, as well? Does your group conduct regular business

*continued on page 4...*

(General Service Matters) continued from page 3... meetings or group inventories? When such elements are operational, the group will be well-informed in its deliberations. A loving God speaks through the group conscience. Greater participation and involvement result in wise decisions.

But what of those groups which are small in membership, or not so well-off financially? How can they help support A.A. as a whole, beyond having involved group members and an active GSR? Here's one practical way: Each and every individual member of Alcoholics Anonymous has an ever-present opportunity to make a difference through direct

contributions to A.A. World Services, Inc. Many A.A. members contribute through the Birthday Plan, by sending in one dollar for each year of their sobriety when their annual sobriety date comes around. Postpaid Birthday Plan envelopes are available for free from our General Service Office. If every sober member of A.A. in the United States and Canada participated in the Birthday Plan this year, our projected \$600,000 deficit would be transformed into close to a \$15 million surplus!

Of course, direct contributions to GSO are possible for any A.A. member to make at any time, even when it is not an anniversary of sobriety. Not only are free

postpaid envelopes available for this specific purpose, but the www.aa.org website also has the capacity to accept secure online credit card contributions. It is not the amount of the individual contribution which matters; it is the percentage of groups and the percentage of individuals within each home group who are contributing – that is what will make a real difference in the end. Let's take back our individual accountability for the future of Alcoholics Anonymous! Why wait until our anniversary rolls around to demonstrate our gratitude? We could send a direct contribution today. ▲

## Rotation Benefits the Whole

By David R., Area 29 Treasurer

The principle of Rotation promotes the welfare of our entire Fellowship. Letting go of a job we love benefits our home groups, Districts and Areas, the General Service Conference, and GSO. It's hard to move on gracefully, but rotating On, not Out, is how Elder Statesmen are born. A past Delegate, in a 1985 Grapevine article, observed:

*"I have never heard a single person speak against the principle of rotation. I think we all realize it is a vital and unique part of our Fellowship--a safeguard we impose upon ourselves to protect the Fellowship from ourselves."*

To turn a common AA slogan on its head: "We may be the only example of the Service Manual someone ever sees." Greater humility comes from knowing from the get-go that all too soon we're going to have to let go of our positions. Rotation is a term applicable to the entire

tenure of our service. It starts on Day 1. The light at the end of the tunnel illuminates our tendency toward Sloth and makes us get busy right away. Perhaps that's the ultimate benefit to AA. We give it our best because, like Life, it's not a dress rehearsal. We work harder than we otherwise would and don't procrastinate. We do this to avoid that most painful regret, the one we feel when necessary things are left undone.

I get to serve my home group as Grapevine Rep. and as one of the Clean-Up crew. At our business meeting in June I will rotate on after 2 years as GVR and I'll lay the church key on the table for the next bunch of coffeepot scrubbers to pick up. One of our new guys is Clean-Up too; it's his first service position and he's very dedicated. He will learn for the first time that the best thing he can do for the group is to rotate too.

Rotating will free him to stand for Intergroup Rep., perhaps. Baltimore AA as a whole will benefit from his newcomer enthusiasm. "Joe" will give up being Secretary. If he didn't lay down the gavel The Better Way of Life group might become known as "Joe's Meeting"...not good for "Joe", not good for AA. This happens because our group members have read The AA Group pamphlet. They understand how The principle of rotation described on page 34 allows us to follow Tradition 2..."Our trusted servants do not govern.":

*"Traditionally, rotation keeps A.A. members from becoming frozen in office. It also ensures that group tasks, like nearly everything else in A.A., are passed around for all to share."*

Non-group members who come to our meeting notice that our service positions  
*continued on page 5...*

### 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 20177  
Baltimore, MD 21284-0177

(Rotation) continued from page 4...

change regularly. Entire groups that were once frozen by Pride or Sloth see that, regarding rotation, the shortest paragraph in the Big Book is true: *"It works, it really does."*

When Area 29 selected its officers to serve beginning in January of last year the Treasurer's name came out of the hat during the Third Legacy procedure. My name on a little orange piece of paper reminds me that I am only steward of the Area's accounts for 2 short years. As a former group Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair I knew Excel spreadsheets pretty well but without the instruction of our Past Treasurer I wouldn't have been able to balance the first month's bank statement. Likewise, had Bob not Rotated On to give me a chance to crunch the numbers Area 29 and the Conference wouldn't benefit from the fiscal prudence of an excellent Panel 62 Delegate.

The Grapevine article also speaks to rotation at GSO:

*"The rotation practiced among General Service Office staff members obviously works very well. GSO staff members rotate assignments every two years. It ensures a continuity of service and a broad-based mutual*

*sharing of knowledge."*

Another Grapevine article from June 1996 reminds us that:

*"From the beginning of AA, the concept of sponsorship has been one of our most important means of passing on experience."*

My mentor, gentle critic, and friend in Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellow group member. He showed me how to be a friend, a good AA, and a responsible trusted servant. He has a grubby old t-shirt that says "Old Guys Rule". That may be true in his Seniors' softball league but it certainly isn't true in AA. My Service Sponsor is a past Trustee, Delegate, and Coffeemaker. His likes to extend "loving invitations" to service, and if necessary, "loving invitations" to step aside when the term is done. Unfortunately I'm sometimes too likely to assume the dangerous role of Bleeding Deacon. They will ensure that when the time comes I'll hand over the checkbook and wait to be asked to share my experience from the back of the room.

I turned 59 recently and have been sober 28 years. Like anyone with white hair my own mortality occasionally comes to mind. Dr. Bob was only 15 years sober when he died in 1950. Bill W.

died in 1971, just as my drinking got out of hand and 14 years before I walked into my first AA meeting. Some would say that Death is the inevitable, ultimate Rotation. But before they checked out those guys made sure that somebody took their places, not only over the 12-Step cup of coffee but on the service committees that make it possible. Dr. Bob explained in his Last Talk how we prepare our successors to take responsibility:

*"Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words Love and Service. We understand what Love is, and we understand what Service is... None of us would be here today if somebody hadn't taken time to explain things to us, to give us a little pat on the back, to take us to a meeting or two, to do numerous little kind and thoughtful acts in our behalf."*

Finally, here's a tangible demonstration of the principle of Rotation. In order to avoid a perilous, prideful situation I am hereby announcing that, as Maryland General Service Chili Cook-off Champion for 2 years running, I am hanging up my ladle and retiring to the judge's table.

Thank you all for your service. Remember Rule 62, finish your work, Let Go, and Pass It On. 🍷

## AAWS Services

By Terry P., MARGENSER Committee

Service, I've heard is the key to sobriety. I have in fact seen it written ... on a button or two. It may be in the literature as well somewhere, but I know one thing for sure, service not only keeps this alcoholic sober, but I get a lot of satisfaction and Good Orderly Direction from service work. But there are a lot of things to learn and know about the multiple facets of service work in Alcoholics Anonymous. Fortunately, there is quite a bit of literature and information that you can obtain about service in A.A., most of which can be found on the AA.ORG website. Along with the A.A. Service Manual, there are a host of guidelines and a variety of newsletters to provide some key information and tips on how to provide services throughout Alcoholics Anonymous. I want to highlight a couple of examples here, and give

you a sense of how some of these tools can help us provide services to the Area 29 fellowship and A.A. as a whole.

**Fellowship New Vision (FNV)** This is an online database that contains group records (both Regular and Correction Facility groups), area officers, committee chairs, District committee members (DCMs), General Service Representatives (GSRs) in addition to committees at the district level. FNV is available for the area registrar or area trusted servant responsible for area group records, and acts as a repository for information on A.A. services. By utilizing the area registrar as a point of contact, a wealth of information is available to committee chairs, DCM's, GSR's and other service positions to get the information they need to provide services for the fellowship. Whether that is the corrections

committee chairs throughout area 29, or the group service numbers for the meetings in your district. The FNV database is a powerful tool to help provide A.A. services. As of this past summer when our Registrar, Scott B. gave the Area 29 Assembly a presentation on FNV, Area 29 has the following information in the FNV database:

- o 850 Active Registered Groups
- o 239 Unknown Groups
  - No point of contact and/or meeting time
- o 636 Listed GSRs
- o 165 Listed Alternate-GSRs
- o 47 Defined Districts
  - 25 listed DCMs
  - 14 listed Alt-DCMs

Additionally our Registrar has added

*continued on page 6...*

(General Service Matters) continued from page 5... information for the officers of Area 29, Standing committee and Ad-Hoc Committee chairs and Co-Chairs, DCMs and some alternate DCMs. There is also information for some area 29 district committees as well as committees for the intergroup. The FNV is a tool that can be utilized by *ALL of the service structure*, from the delegate to the GSR and home group. If your home group needs a list of committee chairs in their district or maybe the intuition sponsors, FNV may provide that vital piece of service information.

For FNV inquiries, please contact Scott B., Area 29 Registrar at: [arearegistrar@gmail.com](mailto:arearegistrar@gmail.com)

*Services Provided By G.S.O./A.A.W.S (Service Material, SM F-176)* I looked at

this factsheet provided on the AA.ORG website when I was researching information on the FNV database. This factsheet is very handy, and provides a wealth of information on resources available from A.A. world Services and the General Service Office in New York. This is a handy reference for service work, and maybe a good thing to have for the home groups to use.

Fortunately, our A.A. fellowship in area 29 has a very active and knowledgeable service base. As we rolled into another season of area regional panels it reminded me that we practice these principles in all our affairs. The regional panel process and ultimately the mini-conference that we hold each year serves well, as our group conscience, to help us provide our well informed delegate and

alternate delegate to the general service conference in New York. This year we used another tool in the service kit bag when we called on previous delegates to acts as mentors to each regional panel. Another word for mentor could be sponsor. So our process was working well as we used our service sponsors to guide us in our service panels.

Of course, for me, just like working the steps I need a guide in service. I remind myself that I'm on a daily spiritual journey of recovery. The steps, service and the fellowship provide me with this foundation I walk on in recovery and my sponsor(s), recovery and service, help guide me on this path. All so I can find a power greater than myself, or as the Big Book describes it, a new Employer. 🌱

## Remembering the 857 Club

By Kelley K

I remember being about 7 years old in the late 70's and spending afternoons on the weekends at the 857 Club with my dad. He had good, long-term sobriety and was a home group member of the 857 Club". He would occasionally take all four of us kids down to "the club."

We did not go often, therefore, we don't remember much about the club, except that it was in Baltimore City, dad would go there to play pinochle with his friends, and there was a "meeting."

Without question, the most vivid memory of the 857 Club for my sisters, my brother and me was the big spiral staircase leading up to the room where the daily meeting was held. These stairs were unforgettable for any kid. They were huge and old and very intimidating. We would sit on those steps and play, or we would sit in the back of the room

where the chairs were and watch a very small black and white television with horrible reception. It seemed that every time we went with dad to "the club" we played on the staircase and we watched the Munsters television show.

Fast forward 30 years later. Now, at 38, I find myself in the rooms of AA and hearing a lot about the first meeting in Baltimore called the 857 Club. The 857 Club will always hold great memories for me. Having lost my father in 1993 when I was 21, I was now in the same fellowship that not only saved his life, but mine as well.

I came across a booklet named Gleanings. A friend in the rooms had borrowed it and I was returning it to the gentleman that it belonged to. I happened to open it up and right on the first page was a picture of the 857 Club on Eutaw

Street in Baltimore City. I loved seeing this, it gave me a chill. Not only was there a picture of the outside of the building, but a picture of the old spiral staircase that I had played on 30 years prior.

That meeting has since moved 2 or 3 times, but for me, the 857 Club on Eutaw Street will always hold a special place in my heart, because that is where my dad would go to get his serenity, enjoy friends and laughter, and play a few games of pinochle with some really special people.

I often think about those great memories of my dad being in that room laughing and enjoying the fellowship and helping other alcoholics. Today I see just how important and symbolic that old staircase was to him, that lead up to a new way of life, a new freedom, and his journey for a happy joyous and free life. 🌱

## Traditions, Traditions Wherefore Art Thou?

By Ron M., Easton, MD

"I'm an Alcoholic and a....." how many times have I heard that phrase at meetings over recent years? As society changes, so do our habits and unfortunately not always for the better. Important lessons

learned in the past seem to fade away. In his writings, Bill W. indicated that the traditions came about to be sure we did not make the same mistakes that proved fatal previously.

Tradition #5 specifically addresses our singleness of purpose. To carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. In many instances, he refers to the Washingtonian *continued on page 7...*

*(Traditions) continued from page 6...*

movement begun in the mid 1800's. Very shortly, they numbered in the thousands. Bill reflected that they had the solution to the problem of alcoholism long before A.A. came along. He noted, however, that they diverted their attention to other problems of the day such as prohibition, politics, religion and the abolition of slavery. All of these timely problems were valid but diverted the movement from the issue at hand. As a result, due to internal squabbling, in a few years they had disappeared. Bill recognized that in order to meet the test of time and survive, a single purpose was the answer. The result was Tradition #5. His observation that some-

times the good is the enemy of the best very succinctly addresses the problem.

From time to time, it is stated that drugs are mentioned in the "Big Book" and that Bill himself took drugs. That is certainly true, but it is also true that Bill is the author of the Traditions, and to expand on major issues he drafted other documents in an attempt to protect the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. One such effort is the pamphlet "Problems Other Than Alcohol" that was published by Grapevine Inc. in 1958. In it, he very specifically talks to the issue of drug addiction and goes on to say that there is no way of making nonalcoholic addicts into A.A. members.

Obviously, this issue has been brewing for quite a while. The 1987 General Service Conference produced what has come to be known as the "BLUE CARD". One side addresses an open meeting, and the other side a closed meeting. Both sides however request participants to confine their comments to the problems with alcohol.

Everyone in A.A. has other living problems and to specifically identify any one issue is an attempt to expand the base upon which membership is predicated and that could easily lead to the exclusion of the still suffering alcoholic. Let's leave other issues outside the rooms of A.A. and focus on our one common problem. ▲

## MARYLAND GENERAL SERVICE, AREA 29 2013 CALENDAR

Mini Conference	April 13	District 22 - Annapolis, MD
General Service Conference	April 20 – 27	New York
Area Assembly (Report Back)	May 4	District 11
NERF	June 7 - 9	Cromwell, CT
MD State Convention	June 13 – 16	Hagerstown, MD
Area Committee	July 13	District 36
Area Assembly	August 10	District 31
Area Committee	September 21	District 40
Area Assembly (Elections)	October 19	District 22
Fall Convention	Oct 24-27	Hagerstown, MD
Area Committee	November 16	District 32
Area Assembly	December 14	District 37

### 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, PO Box 20177, Baltimore, MD 21284-0177. The submission deadline for the next issue is June 4, 2013.

### 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.

# MARGENSER

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Baltimore, MD 21284-0177

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<input type="checkbox"/> Change	<input type="checkbox"/> E-mail Only		

Email form to: Margenser@marylandA.org or  
mail to Maryland General Services, P.O. Box 20177  
Baltimore, MD 21284-0177