

MARGENSER NEWSLETTER

FOSTERING UNITY AND CARRYING THE A.A. MESSAGE IN AREA 29  1st QUARTER 2004

BREATHING LIFE INTO OUR AREA AND DISTRICTS

CALVIN J., CHAIRPERSON, MARYLAND GENERAL SERVICE

Our first Area committee meeting of the year was held in Annapolis, District 31, on February 14, 2004. In attendance were 15 DCMs out of a possible 47. When I look back at the attendance over the past few years, this number is typical for our Area. I often wonder why these, what I consider important Area events, only attract a handful of participants.

I'm reminded that Alcoholics Anonymous is entrenched in the three legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service. We have been granted opportunities to embrace all 36 spiritual principles embodied in our Steps, Traditions, and Concepts. We deprive ourselves of much needed spiritual nourishment when we don't participate in all three legacies. It is like trying to make a cake without one or more needed ingredient or trying to grow and

sustain life on just air, food, and water. In either case, the result is a dull and, in some cases, disastrous product.

In an attempt to understand why our attendance might be so low at "Area business meetings," I've spoken with a number of people. I have heard that some people think our Assemblies and Committee meetings are about politics. I'm not certain I understand what they mean, but I will say that our meetings are held to conduct the business of the Area. Just like there exists vital signs for the person in recovery, I also believe there exist vital signs that indicate a healthy Area and District. For the Area, one of those signs is knowing when and where Area meetings are being held. You can always find out the time and location of Area events by visiting the Area 29 website at www.marylandaa.org.

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A LETTER FROM OUR NEW DELEGATE

NANCY K., AREA 29 PANEL 54 DELEGATE

When I began my journey on July 4, 1988, I never imagined I'd be writing to you as Area 29's Panel 54 Delegate to the General Service Conference. I think that's what they mean by "beyond your wildest dreams." Honestly, I feel fairly inadequate and scared. I do, however, have faith that I'll be okay. My past experience has taught me how to take suggestions as well as criticisms, to be open-minded, to listen, and most important, to ask for help.

When I called my sponsor to tell her the outcome of the Area elections, she was excited for me. She said I'd need time to absorb what just happened, but then the work would begin. She also pointed out that we had a lot of work to do before January, when the mail would start coming in. She wasn't kidding. Between October and January I read and re-read the *AA Service Manual*, re-read *AA Comes of Age*, and went back through the last few years

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MARGENSER STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Area 29 MARGENSER newsletter is published to foster unity and to 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, by Area 29, by intergroups, districts, or local groups, or by AA as a whole.

AA COMES OF AGE

PEGGY T., AREA 29 PANEL 48 PAST DELEGATE

Throughout my journey in sobriety, I have been interested in the history of Alcoholics Anonymous. I was grateful to learn that as a society, Alcoholics Anonymous did not “come of age” out of perfection. Like me in my personal recovery, AA came to a more useful purpose by facing mistakes and learning from them.

I would like to share with you some AA history and commentary concerning the first General Service Conference. That first Conference was held in New York City in April 1951 but not before several important events occurred. During the years 1945 to 1950, one of the important questions of the day concerned the future of Alcoholics Anonymous once its old-timers and founders were gone. As he watched his dearest friend and co-founder, Dr. Bob, become ill from a disease from which he would not recover, Bill W. began to appreciate their mortality. If Alcoholics Anonymous was to have a future beyond the lives of the co-founders, then a plan and a process needed to be developed that would link the groups of Alcoholics Anonymous to its world services. Up to that point, the only links were Bill and Dr. Bob.

Bill writes, “It was evident that here was a world-wide movement that had no direct access to its own principal service affairs. The Trustees had authority over our services; AA itself had no authority. The simple trusteeship had been the ideal guardian for our infancy and adolescence, but how in future years could it possibly go on functioning as it had?”

Bill began exploring various ideas to accomplish this worthy task, but the majority of the Board did not share his concern for AA’s future or his enthusiasm for the project. Once Bill developed the conference plan, he continued to push for its acceptance and implementation; he was convinced that the groups of AA would like to have full access to their own affairs through an elected conference. But neither the Board nor a conclave of old-timers in Akron, Cleveland, and New York saw any necessity for the changes Bill was suggesting.

Finally, it was through the then-Board Chair, Leonard Harrison’s, magnanimous open-mindedness that Bernard Smith was selected to chair the Trustees’ committee on the proposed

Conference. Bill said, “Though Mr. Harrison did not then see the necessity for the elected conference, his unflinching tact and good sense, together with the respect and affection he had engendered among us all, were the qualities that kept our shaky Foundation on its course.” On opposite side of the question, Bernard Smith supported the idea. With his powerful gifts of persuasion and negotiation, he was able to convince the rest of the Board after only two meetings.

These were heady times in Alcoholics Anonymous. The future of our young society was being forged. Just before the Board’s decision, in July 1950, our first International Convention was held in Cleveland. Dr. Bob made his last appearance at that convention, and the Twelve Traditions were confirmed “as the permanent platform of unity and function on which our fellowship would henceforth stand.” Shortly after that event, Bill and Dr. Bob met for the last time.

Dr. Bob was gravely ill. Recognizing that he needed Dr. Bob’s approval and support, Bill came to bring him the good news that the Board had finally consented to try the conference plan. According to Bill, Dr. Bob told him, “Bill, it has to be AA’s decision, not ours. Let’s call that Conference. It’s fine with me.” It was at the end of that final meeting of our co-founders that Dr. Bob said to Bill the often quoted, “Remember, Bill, let’s not louse this thing up. Let’s keep it simple.”

On November 16th, 1950, Dr. Bob succumbed to the cancer he had been fighting since 1947. He left this world having co-founded the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous without ever seeking personal recognition or reward. And he left us knowing that the future of Alcoholics Anonymous rested solely in the hands of a loving God as expressed in the collective conscience of all the groups in AA.

In April 1951, the first Conference members met in New York. Although relatively inexperienced in movement-wide affairs, untried in their new role as “trusted servants, not legislators,” and uncertain of the true significance of their historic role, the first Delegates demonstrated two things very clearly: (1) that there was a need for two-way communication

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FROM OUR NEW DELEGATE

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of Conference Reports. I have to tell you, I'm grateful *AA Comes of Age* is on tape; it's been my daily companion since November.

January hit and the mail began to arrive. I spent these first few weeks getting used to the volume of mail and figuring out what category each item should go into. So far I've received a lot of material on the Conference itself. Lots of forms to fill out regarding housekeeping formalities, such as my travel arrangements and whether I'd like to tour the office or spend a day visiting Stepping Stones. But I realize these are important for the Conference Coordinator to plan the week. I've also received information regarding the 2005 International Convention, Tips for Interpreters for the Hearing Impaired, and information about participating in the trial use of laptop computers during the Conference. After reading the trial guidelines a few times, I decided not to participate for a few reasons: (1) I'm not a great typist and have to keep my eyes and concentration on the keyboard. I'd hate to miss something critical; (2) I'm concerned that the clickety-click-click of my fairly long fingernails might disturb those around me; and (3) I try not to be ruled by fear today, so fear surrounding the above two reasons made my decision pretty cut-and-dry. Why add the stress? Paper and pen work just fine.

Other mail that arrives regularly is new group forms. The General Service Office fills in the group service number and for some of them I have to fill in the District information. Each past Delegate I talked to has handled this process differently, so I've decided on the following: I'll do my best to figure out the new group's District and forward the original forms to the Area Registrar with copies to the Treasurer and the DCM of the District. I will also send a "Welcome to MGS" letter to the group's contact, invite them to contact their DCM, and invite them to join us at our next Assembly.

There isn't enough space here to list all the mail I have received, but I'd like to tell you about one more letter. It was dated January 9 and came from the Conference Coordinator. It was a request for a two-minute Area Report known as "Area Service Highlights." New delegates read these at the Conference after their Regional Trustee has introduced them. They are also published in the final Conference report. These are the highlights I submitted, which I am proud to say I have read numerous times in one minute fifty seconds:

Area 29 covers over 11,118 square miles, which is the State of Maryland minus Prince George's and Montgomery Counties. These two counties are part of the Washington

D.C. Delegate Area 13. Within Area 29 we have 10 Intergroups and 47 Districts. Currently we have over 920 registered groups and a reported 14,784 members. Our Area holds 5 Area Assemblies, 4 Area Committees and one Mini-Conference Annually. The Mini Conference is a two-day event used to prepare our Delegate for the General Service Conference. Our Assemblies and Committees rotate throughout the State, allowing access and exposure to all Districts. The committees of Maryland General Service, Inc. mirror the committees of the General Service Conference with the following standing committees: Archives, CPC, Corrections, Finance, Grapevine, Literature, PI, Registrar, Treatment, and Workshops. We also have several ad-hoc committees, which provide additional services to the Area and include the following: Audio, Fall Conference, Host, Intergroup Liaison, Mini Conference, State Convention, and Margenser, which is the Maryland General Service, Inc. Quarterly Newsletter. Participation by DCMs and GSRs at the Area level fluctuates similar to membership in my own home group. Over the years I have seen attendance and enthusiasm booming while at other times the attendance seems lacking and labored. Much has been discussed and attempted in our Area to increase participation at all levels. We have held multiple workshops regarding the service structure and the importance of the GSR and DCM as well as creating ad-hoc committees to reach out to the "dark" Districts. The continued challenge in our Area is in keeping GSRs and DCMs involved, active, and informed. Although at times it seems like as soon as a spark lights in one District, the flame flickers in another, the hope at the Area level remains constant. To that end we continue to do our best to carry the message of recovery, unity, and service from our Eastern Shore neighborhoods along the Atlantic Ocean to our mountainside communities in the Appalachians.

My calendar is filling up, if there is a District meeting, group conscious, workshop, or anything else you would like me to attend, please do not hesitate to contact me. I'll do my best to attend. You can reach me through the link on the MGS Website at www.marylandaa.org, via e-mail at area29delegate@msn.com

I look forward to all the commitments and the journey that lies ahead. I ask for your patience as I learn and your help to carry me through the hectic times. I have nothing really profound to end with. So I'll end with what I know works: Pray, go to meetings, clean house, help others, and no matter what happens, just don't pick up. Doing these things, one day at a time, has led me to a life beyond my wildest dreams.

A SINCERE EFFORT AND AN HONEST ATTEMPT

DAVE B, 12 & 12 RECOVERY GROUP

At first it was a pleasure to drink. In fact, I loved it. My first experience with alcohol at the age of 13 was exciting. I drank primarily on the weekends with an increasing number of friends, and I rarely got into any trouble.

With good grades in High School and acceptable SAT scores, I went off to college. Living on campus and bathing in the ever-available party atmosphere, I flunked out within three semesters. I had always aspired to be successful and admired people with college degrees, but when I was asked to leave the University, I came to the delusion that they were all a bunch of stuck-up snobs I didn't need anyway. This was my first memorable experience of denial and justification allowing me to continue my self-destructive, alcoholic path.

Following expulsion from college and a year spent as a house painter, I decided to go back to school and attempt to finish my education. This time, over a persistent battle with the bottle, I barely managed to get my degree. After graduating, I married, and the company I worked for part-time offered me a promotion in the sales department. They relocated me to North Carolina, where I would travel the Southeast on a generous expense account and entertain customers. For five years I performed my job duties with over-indulgence. I started my workday entertaining customers at three-martini lunches and ended it with business dinners and bar closings. In my second year of sales, I was the number one seller on a team of 32. By my fifth year, my wife had left me, and my boss was threatening to fire me. Over those five years, I experienced progressive alcoholism and made countless futile attempts to control my drinking.

When I realized I was about to be fired, I moved back to Maryland to start my own business. I located a partner who liked drinking as much as I did. Again, my primary responsibility was to acquire customers, and I did this the only way I knew, by entertaining them at the bar. As the company grew, so did my dependence on alcohol. I reached the point where I needed a drink in the morning to keep the shakes at bay. By our seventh year in business, I was maintenance drinking, requiring a drink every couple of hours, 24 hours a day. I couldn't sleep more than a few hours at night without waking up in sweats, my mind racing, body trembling, needing another drink. It must be the pressure of my job, I thought. Maybe I need time off to get myself together.

I sold my share in the company, my house, and all its furnishings and decided to live a simple, healthy life for a while. Within two months I was lying in bed 24/7,

curtains closed, hoping to have a "balance" of alcohol in my system sometime that day so I could dash to the liquor store to replenish my supply. Not long afterward I got my first DWI.

My lawyer said I needed to see a psychiatrist and attend AA meetings. I went to see one two weeks later, following a morning of drinking. Within a few minutes he was on the phone trying to get me into a rehab. I fled his office yelling, "No way! You're not going to put me into one of those nut houses." On my way home I stopped by the bar for a few more drinks and got my second DWI that same day. When I got out of jail the next morning, I called this doctor and asked him where he wanted me to go.

My first rehab was full of people who professed having from 2 to 14 rehab stays under their belts. I resented this doctor for recommending me to a facility filled with so many weak-willed people. After eight days, I had completed all twelve steps and was cured, or so I thought.

The next four years included five rehabs, more jails, seizures, emergency rooms, lost jobs, bankruptcy, lost friends, depression, and an increasingly dismal outlook on the future. During this period I went to AA meetings (in body only), had a sponsor (in name only), and performed some service work. But following every relapse, I kept coming back. I thought I was doing enough to stay sober. Why did I keep getting drunk?

After a long succession of relapses, I finally had enough and began a sincere effort to live by the principles of the program. With the help of other recovering alcoholics, I began an honest attempt to incorporate the 12 steps into my life, beginning with Step One. I began seeking a useful existence, including following suggestions made by my sponsor, and gratefully allowed the people around me to participate in my recovery.

I recently celebrated one year of sobriety, am employed in a humble profession, and have never been happier. In addition, I have just started another company—one that does not require customer entertainment or travel.

My experience is provided in the paragraphs above. Ironically, my strength has been acquired through a complete and thankful surrender to this disease, coupled with a loving relationship with my Higher Power and the people in AA. I have acquired the hope that a future filled with exciting opportunities has been made available to me, provided I maintain a positive spiritual condition, one day at a time.

AN EXPERIENCE YOU MUST NOT MISS

BILL H, CHAIR, ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A little over four years ago, I was on a train with a home group member, Pete S., on my way to New York for the first time in my life. A couple of months before, a good friend in the program, Arnold R., told me that the General Service Office was looking for an appointed committee member for the Correctional Facilities Committee. I had about 10 years of experience in the institutions area, so I sent a resume and was called in for an interview. On that first train ride, I was nervous about both going to New York and being interviewed. Once I met Greg and Adrienne at GSO, though, my fears vanished. They made me feel comfortable and allowed me to share my experience in the corrections area.

I was completely surprised when I found out I was chosen for the position. What followed, and will come to an end in April 2004, have been four of the most exciting and enlightening years I have experienced in sobriety. First, I cannot say enough about the staff in New York. They are professional, knowledgeable, and most of all, full of love and service. During the time I was on the committee, my wife was diagnosed with breast cancer and eventually underwent surgery. Today she is doing great, a tough survivor of that most hideous disease. In the beginning, however, I thought I'd lose my mind. Facing the reality of my wife's condition was horrendous. But those fine people on New York, whom most of the people in AA never get to meet, came to my rescue with their love and support. They still ask to this day about my wife's health.

The position itself was fascinating. We discussed ideas from the fellowship and prepared them for presentation to the General Service Conference. The AAs involved were enthusiastic and dedicated. But there were these other rare animals I had not had much contact with, the non-alcoholic trustees...you know, those "normal people." I met judges, wardens, lawyers, members of the clergy, people from all over America and Canada. These were people who, unlike members

of the fellowship, did not have a problem with alcohol, yet gave abundantly of their time and experience to be of service to our fellowship. What a concept, a miracle at work on a daily basis.

During my four years, I have met recovering alcoholics from all over the world. I had the privilege to hear Dr. Bob's son, an Al-anon man, give a rendition of his father's last talk, the one on love and service. That was a magical night. The entire group sat in silence, listening to those precious words and feeling as though Dr. Bob, Bill, Lois and Anne were sitting among us with smiles on their faces and tears in their eyes. I have seen members of the General Service Office racked with illness still come and perform their duties. I have also grown closer to my wife in our personal love and growth. (I finally got her to a Broadway show and now I can't stop her!)

I have written a lot of words and maybe not all of them really fit what I'm trying to say. But how can I, a plain old garden-variety drunk with a few days of sobriety, put into words such an experience of love and service? I ask each and every person who may read this, "Get involved in Service." First and foremost in your home group, and when you are ready, start giving it back wherever you can. Your help is needed in Intergroup support, institutional work, 12 step work, Maryland General Service, sponsorship—heck even butt-can person for your home group. Get involved and you will find that you will have "a host of friends—this is an experience you must not miss."

Thank you, Arnold. Thank you, Maryland General Service. Thank you, General Service Office, and thank you to every recovering alcoholic and every AA supporter who I have come across in the past twenty years. I owe you my life, my sanity, my peace of mind and most of all, my sobriety. For that I will always be grateful and hope always to be responsible to extend my hand to the still suffering alcoholic.

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 offer our support.

MARYLAND GENERAL SERVICE COMMITTEE REPORTS

2004 MD STATE CONVENTION JUNE 24-27, 2003

Brian D., Chairman

Brian reports the committee needs a Co-Chair. The 2004 Convention will have Alateen participation, a live band, an Old Timers Meeting, Alcathons all night, and a sit down-dinner. Pre-registration costs are \$22.00 and walk-ins will be \$25.00.

2003 MD FALL CONFERENCE OCTOBER 23-26, 2003

Chuck C., Chair

Chuck thanked the body for the opportunity to serve. There were 860 registrants and the theme, "Happy, Joyous, and Free," came through and was enhanced by the wonderful speakers. Workshops, archives and Alcathon meetings were well attended. Overall the conference was a huge success in that the AA message was carried to all attendees with an honest desire, open mind, and willing spirit.

2004 MD FALL CONFERENCE OCTOBER 28-31, 2004

Skeeter H., Chair

This year's theme is "Love & Service." There has been a large turnout for Committee meetings, and all sub-committee's have been chaired with high energy. The speakers have all been selected. Our next meeting is March 7 at the Alano Club in Columbia. Mike is doing workshops. We are also working on merging State Convention and Fall Conference mailing lists.

ARCHIVES

Bill H., Chairman

The annual fees for storage have been paid for 2004. Approximately six people will meet and help re-organize the archives on 2-22-04. Bill will attend NERAASA. There are no archives today due to an injured shoulder. Bill apologizes for the inconvenience.

Audio Report

Mike K.

One of the CD players is not recording properly and will be repaired, though everything else seems to be working fine.

Mini Conference April 2- 4, 2004

Morgan J.

We expect that our Panels will generate interest. Flyers will be available at future Assemblies.

Cooperation with the Professional Community Report

John B.

GSO invited the Committee to attend the Society of Behavioral Medicine in Baltimore March 24-26. A conversation has been initiated with Parole & Probation for Md. to enable the DWI monitor to help coordinate communication with other DWI monitors.

Corrections

Linda J.

I am grateful to have Dave, who has many years of experience, as Co-Chair. We are registered on the MGS website and have already received requests for info and assistance. We received a request today from our Panel 54 Delegate to place Grapevine and La Viña in prisons. We have received preliminary info from MGS and copies of Sharing Behind the Walls in English and Spanish. I will bring copies to share in the future. I will attend the Institutions Committee meeting in Baltimore with Dave on Feb. 20, 2004. Our goal for Corrections this year will be to examine corrections activity in Area 29 and determine what is available, what's working, and let God guide us from there.

Finance Report

Dennis B., Co-Chair

I'm Putting together info about where MGS money is going to present to committees and Assemblies to help us make more informed decisions about MGS financing. The Committee needs some support.

Host Report

Nanci B.

Thanks to Richard M and District 31 for hosting today's meeting. Each district will be responsible for providing lunch when they host a meeting. I have prepared a cover letter and checklist to assist those districts that have so graciously offered to host an Area meeting. If there is anyone here today whose district will be hosting a meeting, please see me for a copy of the letter and checklist. If anyone is interested in hosting a meeting, please see Calvin or me.

Intergroup Liaison

Bill L.

To date, I have visited the Ocean City and Lower Shore Intergroups at their monthly business meetings. I'm on the e-mail list for Annapolis Intergroup and have met with people from Hagerstown and Mid Shore Intergroups. My plan over the next 30 days is to visit Mid Shore. Thanks to Tom R. for enabling me to visit the Annapolis Intergroup next Tuesday. I will be at the Hagerstown Intergroup meeting with Nanci B. on the last Sunday in March. I have been well received by both OC and

Lower Shore Intergroups. I used the Circles of Love brochure and GSO's Guidelines for Central Offices to help explain that, while each Intergroup is autonomous, Area 29 is a ready, willing and able partner within Maryland to help carry the message.

Literature Report

Tom H.

To make it easy to place literature orders to AA in NY for items not available at Area meetings, I have order forms, labels, and stamped envelopes available for members to take to their Groups and Districts.

Margenser Report

Earl H., Chair

The Committee held its first meeting on February 3, 2004. During this initial meeting the Committee covered a lot of ground to set a course for the coming year. Thanks to Patti and Frank for hanging in there for a long session. The Committee has selected a feature theme and developed a lot of material we will need to meet our charge. The first issue is outlined and a publication schedule for the first issue is in place. The 1st issue will be available at the March 6, 2004 Area Assembly. Everyone is invited to submit articles for consideration. We ask all DCMs and Committees to provide reports on District and Committee activities. The deadline for the first issue is Feb 20, 2004.

Registrar Report

Barbara B. for Nancy B.

Please pick up GSO update packets from the Registration desk and return to the Registrar by April 1, 2004. Today's attendance: 5 of 5 Officers; 3 past Delegates; 14 Committee Leaders and 2 Co-Leaders; 15 DCMs representing 14 Districts; 12 visitors; and 51 members.

Treatment Facility

Jackie W.

I received my package from GSO and am putting together a committee for Treatment. I will be setting the dates, times, and places of Treatment meetings and will e-mail Calvin with this information. Chuck, Dan and J.P. will assist in the committee.

DISTRICT REPORTS

District 6

Gary P.

The last District meeting was held on January 16, 2004, with 9 in attendance. The new Alt. DCM is Dave G. The District welcomes three new GSRs. At the last meeting, we continued discussion on group participation, possibly combining meetings at the same location into one group to encourage participation. We also discussed participating in the Owensville Health Fair in November and a possible future workshop or social event.

District 7

Marshall C.

We meet the 2nd Thursday of each month at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Rt. 108 and Old Montgomery Rd. We had elections in December, and our new Trusted Servants are Marshall C., DCM; Bridgett McC., Alt. DCM; Steve G., Treasurer; and Carletta A., Secretary. Steve R. has been named Chair of an ad-hoc committee to determine if District 7 can support "Bridging the Gap" meetings five days a week at Howard County General Hospital. We also discussed sending Grapevine and La Viña subscriptions to Corrections Institutions. We recently distributed Big Books to local libraries. District 7 is hosting Regional Panel 6 for 2004 and 2005. We will be meeting on March 13th and 20th at the Serenity Center from 1-3:30 pm. We also handed out new District 7 meeting directories to those in attendance at last District meeting. Feel free to make copies of the directory. You may also see your GSR additional directories.

District 9

Dan W.

Our annual Alcahthon was a success with a 25% rise in attendance. Our last District meeting was held on Jan 20, 2004, with 20 in attendance representing 14 groups. All newly elected officers began to serve the District. Topics discussed were the upcoming Spring Breakfast with the date to be finalized at our next meeting in March. Other topics discussed were establishing a CPC Committee, Institution Committee and possible a weekly Open House where groups could purchase literature and get to know the District better. Our next meeting will be March 16th, 2004, 7:30 pm at the Senior Center in Westminster, Md.

District 10

David R.

The District last met on November 15, 2003, and selected David R. as DCM, Mike W. as Alternate DCM, and Pat H. as Secretary. The District decided to exert itself in early 2004 by reaching out to groups without GSRs and to meetings that have never been registered. Of 21 listed groups, 1 has been discontinued and 2 have relocated out of the District. Local directories reveal 4 groups holding meetings within our zip codes that have not registered, making a total of 22. Of these, 10 have identifiable and occasionally active GSRs. I have attended business meetings of 2 groups to invite them to establish their connections to AA as a whole by selecting as GSR. The reception has been positive, although at first they looked like a dog when he's loose on the beltway. By the Area Assembly on March 6th, I expect to have spoken with the rest. The material I left for them to consider included a letter of introduction for my role as DCM, AA World Service's Is Your Group Linked to AA as a Whole? letter, the Area 29 Registrar information printout, the New Group Form or the Group Change Form, and the "Inverted place.

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MGS COMMITTEE REPORTS

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Pyramid" service structure chart and GSR pamphlet. Any new DCM facing the same challenges is welcome to adopt and adapt our intro letter for their own efforts. We are cautiously optimistic about more participation going forward.

District 11

Veronica M.

The last meeting was held on Feb. 2, 2004, with 10 in attendance. We discussed establishing a phone tree to increase attendance, problems with Treasury, Host Committee meeting, and ways for the DCM to increase participation and attract more GSRs. Our DCM and Alt. DCM will visit all groups to increase participation and report progress monthly. We Voted in a Chairperson for the Hosting Committee for the meeting on June 12th (Gwen V. and Ashley W.), voted to pay rent for use of church, and returned all old contribution checks to Home Groups that were outdated or never deposited. A new group, "Sober By the Bay" registered with GSO in January. New GSR Gwen V. represented Swan Group; Ashley W. is the new GSR for Elkton Step Group; and Steve J. is the new GSR for Just for Today Group. New trusted Servants are Veronica M., DCM; Dottie K., Alt. DCM; and Suzanne P., Treasurer.

District 18

Bill M.

No meeting has been held since November 11, 2003; the minutes are in the Dec. 6th minutes. The next meeting will be held on March 2nd at 6:30 pm at Salem Lutheran Church. The District will be participating in Regional Committee 6. The first Committee meeting is scheduled for Feb 21, 2004, in District 7. We will attempt to fill vacant positions and develop interest in groups that do not have GSRs.

District 20

Nanci B.

The last meeting was held Feb. 8, 2004, with only 3 of 15 groups represented. I plan to attend group conscience meetings in my District to ask for election of GSRs to get involved in service. The District is working in conjunction with the Hagerstown Intergroup to put on a workshop on Sponsorship and the Three Levels of Service. This will be held March 20th, 2004. Morgan J. agreed to attend and participate on the panel. Bill H. and Tom H. agreed to bring Archives and Literature displays and offer a few words. The next District meeting is scheduled for March 7, 2004, at 5:00 pm.

District 21

Tammie F.

New officers were elected in November and are now in place. Thanks to all those that served on the previous panel. The Workshop Chair remains vacant. Our GSRs voted to keep its

District Grapevine Committee, even though our local Intergroup has formed a similar committee. We have an incoming Chair, Kathleen M., and she is recruiting committee members now. Currently we are actually having a money surplus issue. But due to the transition of offices, not all of our expenses have been reflected in the ledger as of yet. Our DCM and Grapevine Committee have been green-lighted to restock necessary supplies and begin planning a workshop. The DCM plans to attend NERAASA in New Hampshire. The GSRs have set the meeting calendar for the year, making the necessary adjustments to avoid conflict with the Area schedule. Our next meeting will be held at 1:30 pm on March 13th at St. Albans Church in Salisbury.

District 36

Debbie S.

A new group meets M-F at Lexington Park United Methodist Church at 7:00 am. The last District meeting was held on Feb. 10, 2004. There were 16 people in attendance representing 11 of 30 groups. The following was discussed: welcomed one new GSR and two visitors who had never attended a District meeting, conducted roll call and discussed status of groups attending District 36 meetings, most groups doing well, two groups in need of support. Four of six committees reported on their monthly meetings; all is going well. PI/CPC is in need of a new Chairperson, therefore nothing has been scheduled for that committee. We discussed how to get others involved in service and new ideas will be tried in the future to draw an interest in service at all levels. Dennis B. will do a short presentation about Area Finance at our March meeting. The next District meeting will be held on March 9, 2003 at 6:30 pm in Placid Harbor, California, MD.

District 42

Mike

Frank will assume duties of DCM until formal election takes place.

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 832
Arnold, MD 21012*

34th Annual Area 29 Maryland State Convention

Hosted by
Maryland General Service With
Al-Anon & Alateen Participation



June 24th to 27th, 2004 • Clarion Hotel and Conference Center • Hagerstown, MD

AA SPEAKERS

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Mari G.
Toronto, Ontario | Charlotte F.
Boiling Springs, PA |
| Peter M.
Staten Island, NY | Joe P.
Joppa, MD |
| Jeff V.
Jamestown, ND | Carroll C.
Baltimore, MD |
- AL-ANON SPEAKERS**
- | | |
|---|---|
| Mary Pearl T.
North Little Rock, Ak | Vannoy S.
Marina Del Ray, Ca. |
|---|---|

ALATEEN SPEAKER
To be announced

SCHEDULE

- | | |
|---|--|
| THURSDAY, JUNE 24th | SATURDAY, JUNE 26th |
| Noon Registration opens | 8:00 a.m. Registration |
| 4:00 p.m. Open AA Speaker Meeting | 9:00 a.m. Open A.A. Old-Timers Meeting |
| 8:00 p.m. Open AA Speaker Meeting | 11:00 a.m. Open Al-Anon Speaker Meeting |
| 9:30 p.m. Coffee House | 12:00 p.m. Alateen Pizza Party |
| 9:30 p.m. Alateen Fun & Games | 1:30 p.m. Combined AA/ Al-Anon Workshop |
| | 2:45 p.m. A.A. Workshop (2 to choose from) |
| FRIDAY, JUNE 25th | 2:45 p.m. Al-Anon Workshop |
| 8:00 a.m. Registration | 4:00 p.m. A.A. Workshop (2 to choose from) |
| 9:30 a.m. Open A.A. Speaker Meeting | 5:30 p.m. Banquet Dinner |
| 11:00 a.m. Open Al-Anon Speaker Meeting | 8:00 p.m. Open A.A. Speaker Meeting |
| 1:30 p.m. A.A. Workshops (2 to choose from) | 9:30 p.m. Dance to Live Band |
| 1:30 p.m. Al-Anon Workshop | |
| 2:45 p.m. A.A. Workshop (2 to choose from) | SUNDAY, JUNE 27th |
| 2:45 p.m. Al-Anon Workshop | 10:00 a.m. Open A.A. Speaker Meeting |
| 4:00 p.m. A.A. Workshop (2 to choose from) | |
| 4:00 p.m. Alateen Informational Meeting | |
| 4:15 p.m. Alateen Speaker Meeting | |
| 8:00 p.m. Open A.A. Speaker Meeting | |
| 9:30 p.m. Dance to DJ | |
| 9:30 p.m. Alateen Fun & Games | |



Register in advance today! Walk-in registration will be \$25

Advance Convention Registration

Advance Registration Must Be Post-Marked By June 7, 2004

Mail your registration to: MGS Convention Committee, PO Box 70364, Baltimore MD 21237

First Name _____ Last Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ Email _____

Persons Attending _____
 Registration Fee _____ X \$22 _____00
 Saturday Banquet Sirloin of Beef _____ X \$26 _____00
 One Choice Per Attendee Chicken Tuscany _____ X \$26 _____00
 Eggplant Parm _____ X \$26 _____00
 Total Due: \$ _____00

What one musical group or song would you like to request for the dance?

Please make checks payable to: MGS Convention Committee

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June 24th-27th, 2004 • Clarion Hotel and Conference Center • Hagerstown, MD

Lodging Information

Hotel Reservation Method
 Our Host Facility is the Clarion Hotel and Convention Center.
 Minimum two night stay at this hotel required to get convention room rate.
 \$72 per room, per night.
 Clarion Hotel Reservations Only: 888-528-6738.
Be Sure to Mention MD State Convention.

Other Hotels in the Area:

Comfort Suites	301.791.8100
Days Inn	800.422.2754
Four Points Sheraton	301.790.3010
Hampton Inn	301.739.6100
Sleep Inn & Suites	301.766.9449
Quality Inn	301.733.2700

Note: Most hotels require 72 hours notice to cancel a reservation

Banquet Menu

- Chicken Tuscany:** Sauteed chicken breast topped with mushrooms, onions, roma tomatoes & fresh mozzarella with pesto cream sauce
- Sirloin of Beef:** With roasted garlic demi sauce
- Eggplant Parmesan:** Vegetarian
- All meals include one choice of: starch & vegetable, tossed salad with two dressings, rolls & butter, coffee, decaf, hot tea & iced tea
- Dessert:** New York cheesecake with raspberry sauce
- Fri. & Sat. Dance Sundaes**
- \$5 Build Your Own Sundae:** Vanilla ice cream. Toppings include: strawberries, chocolate sauce, pineapples, walnuts, peanuts and whipped cream.

ADMITTANCE TO ALL FUNCTIONS WILL REQUIRE A NAME BADGE
 For questions and information, Email us at: marylandstateconvention@hotmail.com

Register in advance today! Walk-in registration will be \$25

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. Send all correspondence to Margenser, via e-mail to margenser@marylandaa.org.

AREA 29 COMMITTEES NEED PEOPLE

Have an interest in a new service direction? Join us. Area 29 Maryland General Service has service positions to meet you at the level of your needs. No prior experience necessary. No resume needed. Just a willingness to offer Love and Service. Contact the Area Chairperson at chairperson@marylandaa.org.

AA COMES OF AGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

between the groups and Service Headquarters, and (2) that the great spiritual bonds that unite AAs in an expanding, worldwide Fellowship are stronger than any local, divisive factors.

The five-year trial of Bill's "visionary plan" was under way. Undeniably, Bill "carried" that first Conference, to a large degree, on his own lanky shoulders. Proud of their role but lacking full confidence in themselves and personal knowledge of Service Headquarters and its personnel, the first Delegates repeatedly turned to Bill for historical background, guidance on policy decisions, and clarification of many points.

Yet such was the nature of Bill W. that it could never be said – or more important, felt – that he dominated that first Conference or the next four that led up to the "drama of St. Louis." Implicit in all his comments was a belief and faith that the collective conscience of AA, rather than the breadth of experience or superior insight of any one person, would show AAs how to live and work together and carry this program outward and forward.

On July 3, 1955, during the final hours of the International Convention in St. Louis, the Board Chair, Bernard Smith, came to the stage and looked out over the 5,000 AA members and their families seated in the Keil Auditorium. On the stage with him were the entire General Service Conference, including seventy-five Delegates from the United States and Canada, Trustees of the General Service Board, and the Directors and secretarial staff of our World Services in New York. Also on stage were Bill, Lois, and Bill's mother.

Bernard Smith declared the Fifth Annual Conference of the General Service Conference in session to adopt the resolution authorizing the General Service Conference to act for Alcoholics Anonymous and to become the successor to its co-founders. He said that only the Conference, with the expressed acceptance of all of AA, had the power within the Concepts of AA to adopt this resolution. Bill read the resolution. It was unanimously approved by the Conference.

What happened in St. Louis is not often seen in human societies of our time. Bill went on stage only to cross over the footlights, stepping down from his untitled role as leader to become one

among many members. Behind this act lay months and years of thought, planning, and consultation, crystallized in the "Third Legacy Manual" and its permanent charter for the General Service Conference. Bill's vision had become reality. His faith in the collective conscience of AA had been justified. And by deliberately turning away from the trappings of responsibility, he set an example that should long endure. When Bill and AA's old-timers delivered their twenty-year stewardship of our society into the hands of its elected representatives and we assumed full responsibility for our own affairs, Alcoholics Anonymous truly "came of age."

Bernard Smith insightfully and beautifully answered the question "Why Do We Need A Conference?" in his opening talk at the 1954 Conference:

"We may not need a General Service Conference to ensure our own recovery. We do need it to ensure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to ensure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined for alcoholism. We need it to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in AA that rebirth that brought us back to life.

"We need it because we, more than all others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for power and prestige which we must ensure can never invade AA. We need it to ensure AA against government while insulating it against anarchy; we need it to protect AA against disintegration while preventing over-integration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous alone is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its Twelve Traditions, and all of its services.

"We need it to ensure that changes within AA come only as a response to the needs and the wants of all AA, and not of any few. We need it to ensure that the doors of the halls of AA never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who need us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is."

2004 MARYLAND GENERAL SERVICE CALENDAR

March 6	Area 29 Assembly	District 34
March 6	3rd Annual Dinner Dance	District 32, Ocean City, MD*
March 12 – 14	NERD	
April 3	Area 29 Mini-Conference	Easton, MD
April 18 – 24	General Service Conference	New York, NY
May 15	Area 29 Assembly	District 35
June 12	Area 29 Committee	
June 24 - 27	Area 29 State Convention	Hagerstown, MD
August 21	Area 29 Assembly	District 36, Lexington Park, MD
September 18	Area 29 Committee	
October 1 - 3	NERC	Pittsburgh, PA
October 9	Area 29 Assembly	
October 28 – 31	Area 29 Fall Conference	Hagerstown, MD
November 20	Area 29 Committee	
December 11	Area 29 Assembly	

*For more information, contact Rob A.

BREATHING LIFE....

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

A second vital sign is knowing the name of your Delegate. The panel 54 Delegate is Nancy K. What is the name of your group's GSR? And if you are a GSR, what is the name of your DCM? Our most important piece of business at the Area level is to elect a Delegate every two years to represent Area 29 at the General Service Conference. Our Delegate serves as a conduit between the Area and the General Service Office, representing the collective conscience of the individual groups as voiced through their GSRs. Our Delegate brings to our Area business meetings those Conference items that not only affect our Area directly, but more important, affect AA as a whole. Throughout the year, we have an opportunity, and some might say a responsibility, to inform our Delegate of matters important to our fellowship. Our Delegates in turn can submit these items to the General Service Office for consideration as agenda items for the General Service Conference.

The third vital sign is knowing how your contributions are spent. If you want to know where the money goes, ask your GSR during your group's business meeting. The funds the Area receives from groups are appropriated during our business meetings to support the vital service efforts of the

Area's Standing Committees. Each Standing Committee is responsible for carrying the message not only to the still suffering, but also to the professionals who come in contact with our sufferer and the public who needs to understand this illness.

You will find that many of our Districts need reviving. I know of at least one where groups have elected GSRs, yet there is no DCM. I appeal to all in our membership that might be aware of such a case to please encourage the GSRs to meet and elect a DCM. If you or someone you know needs help with the election process, contact me or our Delegate through our website.

The revitalization of our Districts will certainly help us serve you better. I encourage every active District to adopt a neighboring inactive District. Invite your neighbors to your District meetings. Share the minutes from your District meetings with them. Consider having your District sponsor workshops and form committees charged with informing the public and professionals about our fellowship. If you have a regularly scheduled meeting time and place, please contact the Webmaster at webmaster@marylandaa.org to have your District meetings posted on the Website under "Calendar" In the coming months, I hope to share more on the Area's efforts to "breathe life into our Area and Districts."

MARGENSER NEWSLETTER

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Margenser Newsletter
Mailing List Update Form

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New Correction Change

Group Individual

Mail form to: Margenser
• Catonsville, MD 21228
Or E-Mail to: margenser@marylandaa.org