

MARGENSER

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

Calling All GSRs

Patricia R.
Chairperson, Area 29 Maryland General Service

Are you a Group Service Representative, otherwise known as a GSR? You have probably been told that your service position within your home group is the most important one (other than the coffee maker). Many AAs recognize and value the role of a GSR. Has your sponsor or other member of your network helped you understand the various responsibilities of a GSR? Perhaps you have helped another AA learn how to function as an effective General Service Rep.

More often than I like to think about, some GSRs are such in name only. I believe that it isn't that they don't want to fully function as a GSR, that the most probable cause is that they do not know how; no one has explained it to them or directed them to our literature.

To get the best experience out of being a GSR, you are invited to Maryland General Service (MGS) Area Assemblies. There you will meet and work with other GSRs, committee

continued on page 3...

Delegate's Corner

Barbara B.
Area 29 Panel 56 Delegate

My name is Barbara, and I am an alcoholic. I have the honor and privilege to serve as your Panel 56 Delegate, effective January 1, 2006. My sobriety date is November 13, 1987, and my home group is the Joppa 12 Step Group. We meet on Wednesdays at 8 PM in Joppatown at the Holy Spirit Catholic Church.

I joined this home group when I was about 11 months sober because I was coming up on my first anniversary and needed to join a home group to have somewhere to celebrate. This group had women members, whom I had been told I needed to find, and they made a big deal about anniversaries, which I liked. My husband and I met at this home group. In fact, we joined this group on the same night.

I got involved in General Service a few months after that first anniversary, where the Co-Chair of the Maryland State Convention Committee invited me to join the Committee. I believed him when he said it was where I would learn to have fun in sobriety.

My home group members heard of my committee work and decided I should also be the group's GSR because, as they put it,

continued on page 3...

Table of Contents...

Calling All GSRs	...1	We Have a Voice in the Fellowship	...2
Delegate's Corner	...1	Calendar	...4
Fun...in Service?	...1	Lighting a Fire of Faith	...7
AA's Legacy of Service	...2	A Daily Reprieve	...7

Fun...in Service?

Denise S, Retread Group

Hi, my name is Denise and I'm an alcoholic. My sobriety date is March 7, 1998. My sponsor is a person who believes in action, so in September of 1998, I was introduced to service through the Maryland State Convention Committee. I have been on this committee ever since. I have met many wonderful people and, more than that, made awesome friends!

I've had so much fun that I can remember every sub-committee I served on. I started with decorations, went on to coffee & soda, food & banquet, on-site registration, workshops, pre-registration, Co-chair, then finally Chair of the Convention Committee. I am deeply honored that Area 29 has given me this responsibility. I must confess that I will surely miss this service! However, I am fully committed to the spirit of rotation.

Of course, after starting my service work at the convention level, I have gone onto other positions in the Maryland General Service structure. I have been the GSR for my home group and the DCM for

continued on page 4...

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.

AA's Legacy of Service

Harold G, past General Service Board Trustee

Recovery from Alcoholism as we understand it in Alcoholics Anonymous is a spiritual recovery. Spirituality, however, cannot be accrued in a vacuum; it must be anchored in a bedrock of altruism. In other words, to recover from alcoholism spiritually, we must do something for someone, with no exceptions.

Bill Wilson said it a different way, we have to give it away to keep it. Our twelfth step, carrying the message, is the culmination of spirituality as it is found in the twelve-step process. Service is that basic part of our fellowship that insures that individual recovery will continue. This is the principle aim and the main reason for our existence. AA is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message to those who still suffer as a means to insure our own sobriety.

AA service is anything...anywhere... whatever... that helps us reach a fellow sufferer. This can mean a basic twelfth-step call by way of telephone, computer, or face-to-face. Whatever action is provided to fellow alcoholics that they may hear our message of truth is the sum total of our existence, and this is the Third Legacy of Service.

My experience with service goes back to early 1970, when I had the privilege of carrying the message into correctional facilities, where as an early member of AA I saw the power of Alcoholics Anonymous as it influenced the lives of suffering alcoholics behind the walls. I saw how the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, through its twelve steps, changed the lives of men and women who had lost hope and in desperation sought to find a spiritual pathway. The simple message of Alcoholics Anonymous through its truth and its action as outlined in the twelve steps gave hope and sustenance to people who had none. Bill writes in our book that nothing will so insure continued sobriety as working with another Alcoholic.

In the early beginnings, Bill and Bob, through a series of meeting and discussions, recognized that it was imperative that our message be written down and codified in a

form that would insure that it would not be garbled. Through the trials and tribulations of the actual writing and publishing of our book, the one dynamic that stood fast was that our message had to be carried by one alcoholic talking to another. And even after the book had been published, this fundamental concept became the guiding force for individual recovery and the survival of AA as a whole.

As AA grew and spread throughout the world, a means had to be developed to coordinate the various parts and activities of this organization that reached across the breadth of the planet. In 1950 and 1951, we began to recognize the need of an advisory board or perhaps a conference made up of elected members who would review our headquarters annually, a body of trustees who could become responsible and serve as a guiding conscience to our whole world effort.

There were objections to these ideas (as with most ideas that require change). Individuals felt that the current operation as it was operating in New York would suffice. What finally convinced many of those who objected to the need for an overseeing body was when, in 1950, Dr. Bob became mortally ill.

Bill and Dr. Bob himself recognized that their time would be limited, and it was imperative that AA as a whole survive. So in 1950 in Cleveland, Bill announced the formation of an experimental body, the first conference of which was set for April 1951. The conference was made up of delegates elected by the local area assemblies. Delegate areas were split among those who held even-year elections and those who elected their delegates in odd years, with delegates serving two-year terms. At the same time, Bill and other members of the Board of Trustees recognized that a roadmap or set of guidelines needed to be in place to define how this overseeing body would operate.

It became the providence of Bernard Smith, an attorney and member of the Board of Trustees, who designated a young attorney in his office named Michael Alexander to prepare what we know today as the Twelve Concepts for World Service, which were adopted by the General Service Conference. Our service structure incorporates the fundamental principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Twelfth

Concept includes the Warranties, which insure that no individual at any point or under any circumstance may have more authority over or impose any sanction on any fellow member. Thus we have the same guiding principles in our service structure that Bill and Bob envisioned for the continued growth and success of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Dr Bob summed up in his final message what this is all about – Love and Service. If our fellowship as a whole keeps these thoughts in the forefront, our fellowship will survive and grow, just as our founders intended. ▲

We Have a Voice in the Fellowship

Tom R, Area 29 Alternate Delegate

Friends, I have the privilege to serve Panel 56 as your Alternate Delegate. It is humbling to me to serve in any capacity in Alcoholics Anonymous, and since my first Area Assembly in 1998, I can honestly say my heart truly belongs to Maryland General Service. I look forward to spending the next two years traveling around and serving Area 29.

We are at this time working toward our Area 29 Mini-Conference to be held at the Ramada Inn in Salisbury on April 7 - 9, during which our fellowship will have the opportunity to share our Area's collective conscience on this year's Conference agenda items and prepare our Delegate for the General Service Conference. The Final Conference Agenda and background material pertaining to them will be available to us soon. We will have the opportunity to review and discuss these items before the Mini-Conference, through our Regional Panels.

Our Regional Panels simply consist of six geographic regions throughout Area 29. Each region will have a Panel Leader who will set up meetings to discuss Conference agenda items related to two or three topics, such as Literature, Public Information, Agenda, Conventions, etc. This is our opportunity to voice our views and form our conscience on matters which

continued on page 4...

(Calling All GSRs) continued from page 1...

chairs, and other AAs who all strive to promote UNITY, the third leg of our triangle. If you are reading this in February, then you have time to plan to attend the May 19th Area Assembly.

Details on the location and agenda will be available no later than mid-April.

Maybe your District would like to host an Area Assembly. It's a very rewarding experience to have eighty to a hundred AAs at your fingertips. Your network grows exponentially each time you attend an Area Assembly. See the MGS Host Committee Chair Tammie F. or me, your Area Chairperson, to discuss the possibility. We are easy to find at each of our assembly or committee meetings. Perhaps you are interested in joining a committee at the Area level. If so, please plan to attend our Area Committee meeting on March 18th at 5150 Leonardtown Road, Waldorf, MD.

GSRs serve three primary roles: First, they represent their groups at District meetings and Area Assemblies. They carry vital information to the Home Group from those meetings. Second, they keep group members informed about General Service activities, especially those that take place locally. Third, GSRs receive and share all mail from the General Service Office, including "Box 4-5-9" with home group members.

Our General Service office offers help to GSRs through AA literature and the Internet. A good service piece to read would be the pamphlet "The AA Group – Where it all begins" (publication number P-16). It reminds the GSR that she or he is the guardian of our Traditions. Another excellent source of information is "GSR" (P-19). It explains in everyday language how to fulfill the role of the GSR.

We look forward to meeting you at our Area Assembly meetings. Bring a sponsor or even your sponsor; all AAs are welcome. Help link your home group to AA as a whole. ♣

(Delegate's Corner) continued from page 1...

I would be attending the assemblies anyway. I am grateful that they asked me to be their GSR because I did attend the assemblies, and that gave me the opportunity not only to learn a lot about General Service, but also to learn about the principles found in our Traditions and Concepts. I served on the Convention Committee for eight years, rotating off after chairing it in 1995.

After rotating, I thought I was through with General Service, but when I showed up at Area Assembly to give my final report as the Convention Chair, I ended up volunteering to Chair the Workshop Committee. I enjoyed helping districts organize workshops, arranging workshops at the Area Assemblies, and meeting people throughout the north-east region who love service work.

When elections were held for Panel 50, it was suggested that I stand for Area Secretary. I served as Secretary on Panel 50, then Chairperson on Panel 52, Alt. Delegate on Panel 54, and now I'll be serving as your Delegate at the 56th General Service Conference to be held in New York City from April 23 - 29. A lot of work goes into the preparation. In December, Panel 56 delegates were assigned to the various General Service Conference committees.

My General Service Conference assignment is to the CPC Committee, and I will be working with other Delegates, Trustees, and GSO Staff. The theme of this year's Conference is "Sponsorship, Service, and Self-Support in a Changing World." Here are the presentation and discussion topics.

A. Sponsorship:

1. Presenting AA to Newcomers
2. Changes in the Alcoholic Coming to AA
3. Sponsorship Into Sobriety, Into Service

B. Service:

1. Performing Service Without Expectations
2. Leadership – An Ever Vital Need
3. Responsibility With Accountability

C. Self-Support:

1. An Informed Group Conscience
2. Gratitude Through Self-Sacrifice

I ask all of you to begin discussions in your groups, at your business meetings, and with fellow members. We will be organizing our Regional Panels and distributing the Conference Agenda Items and background information. This is the time we get into action and accept the challenge of informing the Area and formulating an informed group conscience. I invite you all to the conference experience by attending our Mini-Conference scheduled for April 7-9 at the Ramada Inn in Salisbury.

My goals as your Delegate will not only be to carry out the duties you have entrusted to me, but also to share my love of service and the immense benefits that service has brought to my life in hope of leading others to the same path. I feel certain that my world, as I know it, is about to change and that this experience will transform my life beyond anything I could now imagine.

I can be reached at
delegate@Marylandaa.org.

. . . Altogether I have spent 17 of my 18 years of sobriety in service in Maryland General Service. And I do not believe I would be enjoying the sober life I have today without my service experience. ♣

(We Have a Voice...) continued from page 2...

affect AA as a whole. Please see your group's GSR or your DCM to find out when your Regional Panel will meet. You can see me as well. Our Regional Panels will select presenters to share each Panel's topics and discussions at the Mini-Conference. The floor is also open at the Mini-Conference for discussion, therefore all AA members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Throughout the year, our groups have a voice through their GSRs to their DCMs and to the Area. The Regional Panels provide the forum for us to sit down, review and discuss our Conference Agenda, and the opportunity to present our thoughts and collective conscience to our Delegate at the Mini-Conference. It is reassuring and comforting to me that I have a voice in the fellowship that saved my life. I feel a part of something much greater than myself. Thank you for allowing me to serve. ▲

(Fun in Service?) continued from page 1...

my district. The work we do at the Area level is quite fulfilling; you truly see what AA is all about! I have had the opportunity to meet some people in Area 29's service structure that have touched my life.

My sponsor and other people in the fellowship have taught me that when you put yourself into AA (and not around it), you receive so much more. So my words to all people about service...GO DO IT AND HAVE SOME FUN! ▲

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 22561
Baltimore, MD 21203

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. Send all correspondence to Margenser Parkville, MD 21234 or via email to margenser@marylandaa.org. The submission deadline for the next issue is April 25, 2006.

AREA 29 MARYLAND GENERAL SERVICE 2006 CALENDAR

February 18	Area Assembly	Queen Anne's – District 24
Feb. 24-26	NERAASA	Burlington, VT
March 10-12	NERD	TBA
March 18	Area Committee	St. Charles – District 35
April 7 - 9	Mini Conference	Ramada Inn – Salisbury
April 23-29	General Service Conf.	New York
May 13	Area Assembly (Report Back)	TBA
June 15-18	MD State Convention	Clariion Hotel, Hagerstown
August 12	Area Assembly	Northeast, MD – District 11
September 16	Area Committee	TBA
October 28	Area Assembly (Inventory)	at Fall Conference
October 26-29	MD Fall Conference	TBA
November 18	Area Committee (Budget)	TBA
December 9	Area Assembly (Budget)	TBA



NERAASA '06

Fifteenth Annual Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly

2006 General Service Conference Theme “Sponsorship, Service and Self-Support in a Changing World”

**Burlington, Vermont
February 24th, 25th and 26th, 2006**

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (NERAASA) is for GSR's, DCM's, Area Committee Members and Intergroup/Central Office Representatives of the Northeast Region to discuss General Service Conference related issues and concerns affecting A.A. as a whole, as well as pertinent aspects of recovery, unity and service common to the areas of the Northeast Region.

ALL A.A. MEMBERS ARE WELCOME!

LOCATION:

Sheraton Burlington Hotel and Conference Center, Burlington, Vermont
Hosted by Area 70 Vermont

DEADLINES:

Hotel Reservation	February 3, 2006
Meal Registration	February 15, 2006
NERAASA Registration	February 15, 2006 by mail, otherwise on site

ON SITE REGISTRATION:

Begins at 1:00 pm
Friday, February 24, 2006

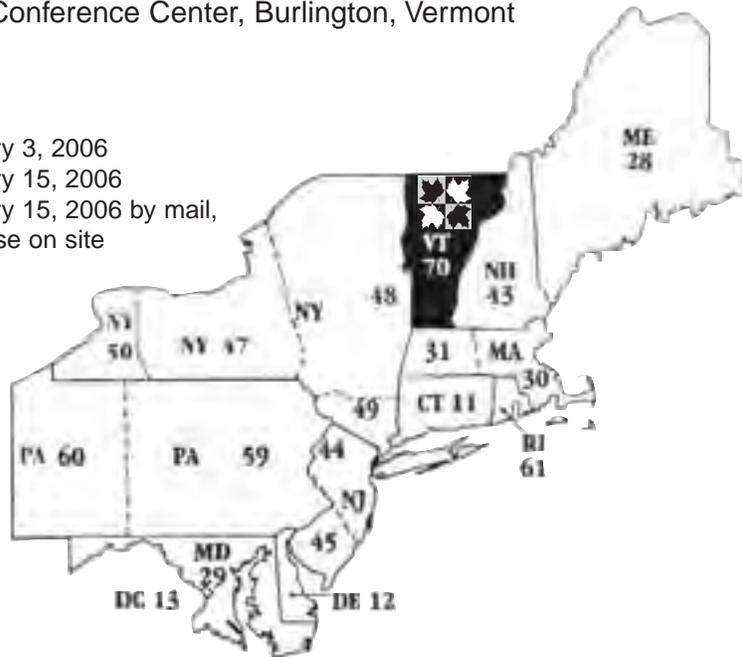
FIRST PANEL:

Begins at 3:00 pm
Friday, February 24, 2006

ICE BREAKER AA MEETING:

Thursday Evening
February 23, 2006

www.aavt.org



NERAASA 2007 Planning Committee Meetings

Second Friday of the month beginning January 13, 2006. 7:00 pm
at Christian Temple, 5820 Edmondson Ave., Catonsville, MD

Yes folks, right here in our own back yard, Maryland is hosting the Sixteenth Annual Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly. Get involved in the planning of this exciting event.

Have questions? Want to know about the responsibility of carrying the message of Unity, Service and Recovery? This could be one of the highlights of your spiritual journey. Come and enjoy.

Area 29 Mini-Conference

April 7-9 2006, Ramada Hotel & Conference Center, Salisbury, MD

Come and help to prepare our Delegate, Barbara B., for The General Service Conference in New York. General Service Representatives, District Committee Members, Everyone in the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous is invited to this enlightening event. Registration (no cost) This will be on Friday evening together with an open discussion meeting. On Saturday we gather to discuss the various Agenda topics to be presented at the Conference in New York. Your HomeGroup, your district speaks its group conscience. Come and join in this fascinating and important work.

Lighting a Fire of Faith

Jeff M, DCM District 29

On page 310 of the Daily Reflections (October 29), it speaks of the Unbroken Tradition:

“We conceive the survival and spread of Alcoholics Anonymous to be something of far greater importance than the weight we could collectively throw back of any other cause.”

I have spent much time in my life searching for ways to make money and to become successful, respected, and loved – trying to achieve the things that I thought would make me happy. And in doing so, I disregarded all the directions and recommendations of my family, faith, and education. I wasted opportunities and unknowingly became so self-destructive that I was neither a part of anything nor a family member or operator of my own business.

My bottom may not have been as low as some, but I am truly convinced that I would become as sick as the sickest, most desperate drunk that I have met or worse, if I had continued down the path I was on. I'm glad I put down the shovel and asked for a hand to get out of the pit of despair that alcoholism had created for me. I am an alcoholic, and without this program, I would wither and die. Nowhere have I found the love of life and the fear of self-will in so many people. Together in our group conscience (which blows me away) we find the Spirit of God so close. And it started with one drunk trying to help another drunk to stay sober.

This program has been here for me after numerous attempts by the judicial system to help me be a responsible operator of a motor vehicle. But when I was truly lost and did not know anything other than I could not drink anymore, when I knew that I was powerless, you all were here for me. And for this I am eternally grateful.

I have learned from you all that I must give away what I have been given. I have learned that our greatest gift to each other is our time and attention. You allow me to have my beliefs and to be free to hold my own opinions. But AA's purpose clearly stated 71 years ago is for me to stay sober. To do this I must, on a daily basis, be a small part of this Power greater than myself. It's "We." And if I want the hand of

AA to be there, and I choose to be responsible, I have to be of service, and you are showing me how. So I must be in the right place.

“Like the sun focused through a magnifying glass, AA's single vision has lit a fire of faith in sobriety in millions of hearts”, including mine. ☺

A Daily Reprieve, One Newcomer at a Time

Rosean K, *The Bloomsbury Believers' Group, Bloomsbury, NJ*

When I work with new drunks, I stress how important it is to find someone within the Fellowship to whom they will listen. I have an agreement with my own sponsor that I also ask the women I sponsor to commit to, and that is that I have two choices when my sponsor 'advises' me; I can act on the advice she gives me, or I must tell her that I am not going to act on that advice. The latter option, if invoked, means we will spend time discussing whatever it is that I am balking at, until we come to an understanding of what action I will take instead. Many times it is only through discussion that I discover the reason behind my reluctance to do something. And a great deal of 'growth' takes place with whatever choice I make, because both involve taking action.

The women I encountered when I was new to Alcoholics Anonymous guided me through the steps of the program without my being fully aware that this was what they were doing. I was told I did not have to want to do what they were telling me, nor did I have to believe what they were saying would have the desired effect; I just had to take the actions that they themselves were taking along with me. And so I 'worked' the 12 steps for the first time within my first 30 days or so of going to meetings. It was stressed to me that what they were teaching me would become a life-long practice, because I would do the steps again and again, and would eventually begin doing these same things with other women who were new. I am grateful for that foundation given to me early on, because I have been privileged to sponsor women in that same way, and have seen that it works.

I usually try to have a prospect do the

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.

steps rather quickly the first time, and then again, and then again. I have made it a practice the first time through the 4th step to deal only with those resentments that are immediately in the way of connecting with a Higher Power, and many times I will take pen in hand and begin writing the resentments down. This seems to help prevent the procrastination for which we alcoholics are sometimes famous! Generally, by the second or third time through, newcomers have come to believe that these steps are working, because their responses to everyday events have changed through their having had the benefit of a couple of spiritual awakenings, which bring about a change in their perception of their surroundings.

If, however, a woman drags her feet and is truly reluctant to do any of the work, I wait for her to become 'stark raging sober', and to ask me why she is still so unhappy. It is then that we can begin working the steps with the newfound willingness born of desperation. Of course, the best part about working with newcomers is what it promises in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous ... I receive a daily reprieve from my disease. ☺

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.

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MARGENSER Mailing List Update Form

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 Group Individual

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