

MARGENSER NEWSLETTER

FOSTERING UNITY AND CARRYING THE A.A. MESSAGE IN AREA 29



2nd QUARTER 2002

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

BARBARA B.

The following is an excerpt of a panel discussion our Maryland General Service Chair was asked to present at NERAASA during the February Service Assembly in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Let me introduce myself. My name is Barbara and I'm an alcoholic. My home group is the Joppa 12 and 12 Group. We meet on Wednesdays at 8pm at the Holy Spirit Church in Joppa, Maryland. I am currently serving Chairman for Area 29. The question I was asked to present was, Should we revise the "The AA Group" pamphlet to encourage groups to provide accessible meeting places and accommodate AA members with special needs?

The "AA Group" pamphlet was designed as an easy reference guide to inform our members on what an AA group is, how it functions, how it relates with others in our community, and how it fits into the structure of AA as a whole. The pamphlet emphasizes Tradition 4; "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole" and Tradition 5; "Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers". The purpose of all AA group meetings, as our preamble also clearly states, is for members to "share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

As written in the pamphlet's introduction, the

entire structure of AA depends upon the participation and conscience of the individual groups. How each of these groups conducts its affairs can have a rippling effect on AA everywhere. Many of us would not recover without the AA group. It is the purpose of a group inventory to evaluate how well the group is fulfilling its primary purpose.

The "AA Group" pamphlet was first published in 1965 because the AA group is where AA's service structure begins. The first General Service Conference advisory action regarding the pamphlet was in 1968, when it was recommended that the pamphlet be brought to the attention of new group officers as they rotate with the hope that they, as leaders, would be better-informed and foster unity. After 1968 some editorial changes were made and in 1990 a complete revision of the pamphlet was published.

Written in the early edition of the pamphlet was a request that groups trying group inventories send their results to the General Service Office and many groups complied. Although I have not found this passage in the revised pamphlet, I believe it was in this spirit that the request by the South East New York Area was made to add a question to the group inventory "is your group accessible and welcoming to those with special needs?"

The Conference Literature Committee Agenda Item D addresses this request by considering two suggested

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MARGENSER STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Area 29 MARGENSER newsletter is published to foster unity and to facilitate communication among A.A. members, groups, districts, and intergroups within the Maryland General Service Area.

The MARGENSER aims to be instrumental in carrying the A.A. message. This quarterly newsletter seeks to publish A.A.-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 A.A. policy. Finally, publication shall not constitute endorsement by the newsletter itself, by Area 29, by intergroups, districts, or local groups, or by A.A. as a whole.

SECRETARY'S CORNER

TOM R.

An Attitude of Gratitude

In my first days of sobriety, it was suggested to me that whenever it is asked of me to perform a service for Alcoholics Anonymous, I should say yes. This simple philosophy was a segue into service work.

As I have heard so many others share, I was given the gift of desperation when I arrived in the rooms of A.A. I had reached a point in my drinking where I knew if I did not take action immediately, I would continue drinking. I could not stop on my own. The only thing I could think of doing now was coming to an A.A. meeting. I had been "around" the rooms before, but had still clung on to idea that I could run my own life just fine, thank you. Another two years of uncontrollable drinking proved otherwise. Desperate, but not despondent, - fearful, but not without hope, I became willing to listen to suggestions.

My sponsor gave this simple message to me: Don't drink, go to meetings, and pray. I do not believe that the slogan "Think, think, think" was ever meant for me. What best seemed to work for me was not thinking, rather listening to suggestions of folks who have maintained sobriety for ten, fifteen, even twenty years. They all seemed to know what worked. And no one has given me a bad suggestion in A.A.! At first, I was told that life never had to be the way it was for me when I was drinking. This has surely come true. I was told to keep coming back to meetings. My sponsor helped me with the twelve steps, and showed me how I can find them in the Big Book (I have to read it!).

I have seen by my sponsor and others as they lead by example, that a key to fulfillment in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous is getting involved in service work. Whether it was leading a discussion meeting, being a greeter, making coffee, setting up literature, or performing service work beyond the group level, it became inherent to me that service work is an integral part of recovery in A.A.

I have heard many folks debate over what is considered the most important job in Alcoholics Anonymous. Perhaps the most important job for me after all is to show up at an A.A. meeting, and talk to another alcoholic.

After six months of sobriety, I accepted a position as secretary of a step meeting, and have not been without a service position since then. It is without question that when someone asks me to do something for Alcoholics Anonymous, I say yes. It can be argued that the disease of alcoholism took away seventeen years of my life. What, in turn is it to ask that I give a weekend, a day, or an hour of my time today for A.A.? Were it not for A.A., would I not be in an institution, dead, or worse, still living in my alcoholic insanity?

It is with a great deal of gratitude and love for Alcoholics Anonymous that I freely give of my time and energy, my devotion to A.A. for all it has given me. Service work seems an oxymoron, for the service that is done is truly a labor of love.

Tom R.

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

BARBARA B.

changes to the "AA Group Inventory Section" of the "AA Group" pamphlet: Pages 35 & 36. The section currently reads: #3. Is the group attracting alcoholics from different backgrounds? Are we seeing a good cross-section of our community? #10 Are we doing all we can to provide an attractive meeting place?

The revised questions will read: #3. Is the group attracting alcoholics from different backgrounds? Are we seeing a good cross-section of our community including those with special needs? #10. Are we doing all we can to provide an attractive and accessible meeting place?

While I believe that the question of accessibility might be particularly worthwhile for a group to examine if it is planning to relocate or for a new group to consider in its search for a meeting location, most

existing groups must contend with whatever the current condition provides. Our 3rd Tradition states the only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking and our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Our 6th Tradition addresses the question of special needs when it declares problems of any type (money, property, authority, etc.) may divert us from our primary purpose.

Although I am very fortunate to be recovering in an area where there are so many meetings they seem to be completing with each other and choices abound. We should be encouraging groups to practice these principles that unite and protect us because our lives depend on them. Alcoholism is our common bond and our recovery depends upon AA unity.

Barbara B Chairman, Area 29

PINK CLOUD

PATRICIA R.

Thanks to the gifts of recovery, I am floating on a pink cloud that I haven't felt for a few years. In early sobriety my ride on the pink cloud was long and wonderful. But then life happened and I became embroiled in day to day living as "normal" folks do. I embraced the highs and tolerated the low points in recovery, part of acceptance.

This morning (Inauguration Day) at 4:30 my alarm went off. Thankfully that usually doesn't happen on a Saturday. Today was different, it was my commitment to District 36 and I was expected to meet other recovering alcoholics at the Hollywood Firehouse and drive to Frederick for the Area 29 Assembly. Folks, this was the last thing I wanted to do today. I had many reasons, but the weather was the biggest one, it was raining and was expected to keep raining all day. Further, the weather reports threatened snow and ice in the Frederick area. Thoughts raced through my mind to call and cancel, I had a good excuse. But thankfully, I went through with the commitment and am now on this pink cloud thanks to a day of service work with some wonderful alcoholics who also sacrificed their

Saturday and drove for hours in miserable weather to fulfill commitments to their various Districts throughout Area 29. I was reminded on the drive to Frederick that our Big Book says that the true meaning of service is sacrifice. If this is what it takes to keep me sober another day or two, I'll do it forever. Recovery is the best thing that has ever happened to me.

District 36 is fortunate to have an active body of participants at our monthly meeting at Placid Harbor. Our District far surpasses most in Area 29 when it comes to participation at the District level. There happen to be forty-seven Districts in our Area, so this is a supreme compliment to the men and women who serve their groups by participating at the District 36 meeting each month. Our Service Manual spells out the responsibilities of the GSR's as well as all of our service positions. It tells GSR's to attend the four Area Assembly meetings sponsored by Area 29 each year. Perhaps I could interest you in a round trip ticket to the Area Assembly on a pink cloud.

CALLING ALL DCMs AND GSRs

Please provide a quarterly update to the MARGENSER editor. Let all the alcoholics in Area 29 know what is going on in your District/Home Group. All Districts are encouraged to submit details of AA activities.

District 9 will host the Hospitality Room for the 2002 Maryland State Convention. Michael S. will chair that effort.

District 21 meets the 4th Saturday of each month at St. Alban's Church in Salisbury at 1:30 p.m. District 21 hosted a workshop breakfast on "AA Comes of Age." It was a great success. The next workshop planned is "The GSR." Jen Z. is asking for ideas, suggestions, advice and help. Watch this space for further details on the workshop. District 21 notes that of the past 8 years, they have had the topic "Report & Charter" for cluster topics. It is their hope that next year they will have a different topic. District 21 is trying to encourage District 25 to be active in Maryland General Services. Of 22 groups in District 21, 9 were represented at the March 2002 District meeting.

District 36 meets the second Tuesday of each month at the International Aerospace and Machinist Workers Union Hall, otherwise known as Placid Harbor Yacht Club (or Harry Winpisinger Conference Center) at 6:30 p.m. District 36 is working to encourage home groups to finance GSR's attendance to the Area Assembly meetings. A workshop titled "The Home Group" will be held on October 5, 2002. Watch this space for details as time draws closer. The Public Information (P.I.) and Cooperation with Professional Communities (C.P.C) committees have sent local radio stations and newspapers some Public Service announcements in hopes of carrying the message to still suffering alcoholics. See Jim M. for details. Of 28 groups in District 36, 10 were represented at the March 2002 District meeting.

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR HOME GROUP OR DISTRICT'S REPORT TO THE MARGENSER EDITOR.

MARYLAND GENERAL SERVICE COMMITTEE REPORTS

2002 State Convention Report

Ralph O., Chair

Ralph O. reports that the following committees have been invited to participate with displays and information in the Hospitality Room at the State Convention:

- Archives
- Correctional Facilities
- CPC (Cooperation with Professional Community)
- Grapevine
- Intergroup
- Literature
- Margenser
- PI (Public Information)
- Treatment Facilities

Workshop Committee Report

Luther W., Chair

The Traditions Play was done at the Area Assembly on December 15, 2001. We would like to thank past Delegate, Paul W., Gene R., and the rest of the crew for a job well done. Everyone enjoyed the play very much.

The DCM of District 9 requested a script of the Traditions Play. We called Paul W. (past Delegate) and asked him to please make a copy and mail it to us. We hand delivered it to Dave R., DCM of District 9. We would like to thank past Delegate Paul W. for all his help in this matter.

John B., Area Literature Chair, reports the local Hagerstown Intergroup has requested a workshop on Answering Services. We called Susan K. of the Baltimore Intergroup and requested she do a workshop. Susan K. gratefully agreed and the workshop is in the planning stage. Skeeter from Hagerstown and Susan from Baltimore are working out the issues. Thanks go to John B., Susan K, and Skeeter for their participation in service work.

This committee was honored when asked to participate in a workshop for District 35, Area 59 in Hanover, Pa. The workshop was "**TIME TO GROW – DISTRICT STRUCTURE**", and was held on April 6, 2002. It was wonderful to see so much participation from Area 59, Area 60, and Area 29. We would like to thank District 35 of Area 59 for inviting us. We would also like to thank Dave R. Alt DCM, District 9, for his help.

The workshop committee is currently working on workshops for Northeast, and maybe Chestertown. There will also be a workshop at the August Assembly.

If you would like to help on the Workshop Committee, we always have room. If you would like us to help you with a workshop, just call. Please leave a message if we are not available.

Yours in Love and Service,
Luther W.
Workshop Chairman

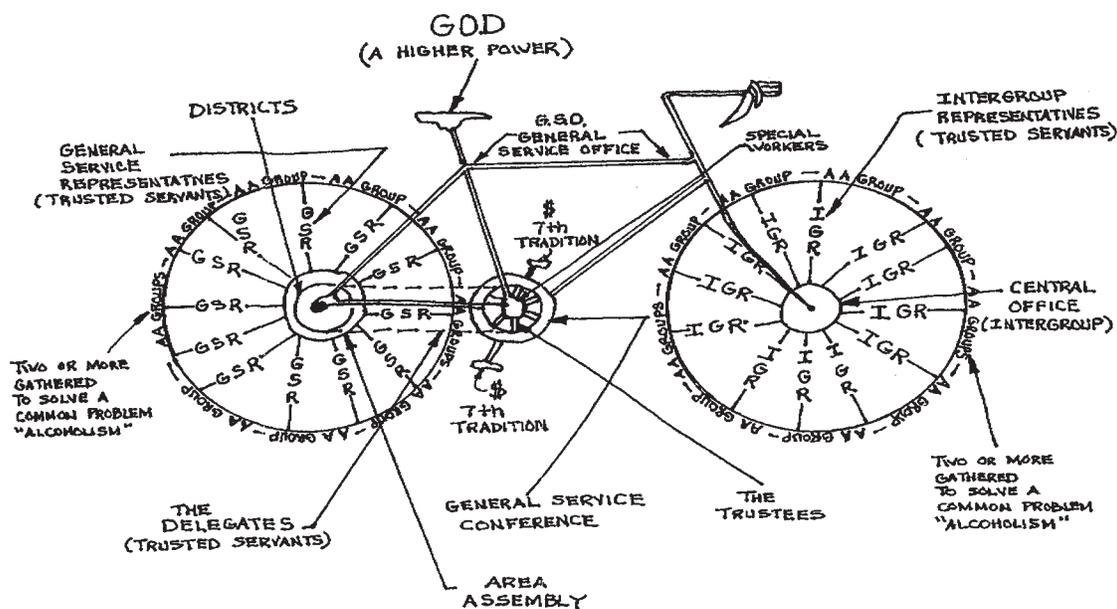
ANNOUNCEMENT TO ALL COMMITTEE CHAIRS

In order to keep Area 29 alcoholics informed of the service work in our Area, please submit a quarterly report to MARGENSER chair. This could include action items, planned events or "to do" list. Submit anything you feel is important and allow the committee to include your submission in the next issue of MARGENSER. Thank you in advance for helping make the MARGENSER an informative AA publication. The MARGENSER is a "we" project published four times a year.

To submit letters, articles, thoughts, or complaints to the MARGENSER Newsletter, write to: Margenser, P.O. Box 465, Valley Lee, MD 20692; or e-mail margenser@marylandaa.org

THE AA BICYCLE — TRAVELING THE ROAD OF RECOVERY

SUBMITTED BY ARNOLD R.



COME JOIN US FOR A RIDE

THE WHEELS:

One drunk talking to another forms a little group—others join them and as they grow and expand more little groups are formed. These little groups are the rubber tires of each wheel.

One wheel has many spokes known as the **INTER-GROUP REPRESENTATIVES (IGRS)**, who attend intergroup meetings keeping a two-way flow of information going between the **Central Office** and the little groups.

These spokes connect at the HUB; which is the **INTERGROUP** or **CENTRAL OFFICE**; who elect officers and appoint committees to carry on the work of the little groups locally.

One wheel has many spokes known as **GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES (GSRs)**, who attend district meetings linking his/her little group to A.A. as a whole.

THE FRAME:

The **GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE (GSO)**, is the **HUB** of A.A. activity, something like an oversized intergroup or central office? But, it is much bigger... The national A.A. Business office, only more.

THE CRANK:

The **GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE**, the actual voice and effective conscience for our whole society, operates the movements of the A.A. structure. Together with the **TRUSTEES**, A.A.s and non A.A.s working as **SPECIAL WORKERS**, needed for the good of A.A. as a whole.

THE PEDALS:

The **7th TRADITION** of A.A. is the lever turning the crank which operates the frame.

THE CHAIN:

The **DELEGATES**, as one of the many trusted servants carrying the group conscience from the Areas the Delegates connect the messages from the little groups to the crank, powered by the contributions, and operating the frame turning the wheels.

THE SEAT:

Guiding A.A. as a whole from the voice of the little groups is a **HIGHER POWER, A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES, THE 'GOOD ORDERLY DIRECTION' IS GOD.**

AREA 29 CALENDAR FOR 2002

May 18, 2002	Area Assembly (report back)	District 36 Lexington. Park Hagerstown, Md.
June 13-16, 2002	Maryland State Convention	District 10 Annapolis
July 13, 2002	Area Committee	District 31 Severna Park
August 17, 2002	Area Assembly	District 21 Salisbury Portland, Maine
September 14, 2002	Area Committee	District 7 Ellicott City Hagerstown, Md.
October 4-6, 2002	NERC	District 1 Prince Frederick
October 12, 2002	Area Assembly (Inventory)	District 20 Hagerstown
October 24-27, 2002	Fall Conference	
November 16, 2002	Area Committee	
December 14, 2002	Area Assembly	

AREA 29 PANEL 52 OFFICERS

Delegate:	Victor L.
Alternate Delegate:	Calvin J.
Chairman:	Barbara B.
Secretary:	Tom R.
Treasurer:	Nancy K.

**Deadline for the
next issue of the
Margenser is
August 2, 2002.**

MARGENSER NEWS

To submit letters, articles, thoughts, or complaints to the MARGENSER Newsletter, write to:
MARGENSER
P.O. Box 465
Valley Lee, MD 20692
or e-mail: margenser@marylandaa.org;

Keep in touch!

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO . . .

To support AA's essential services, the General Service Conference suggests individual groups adopt a specific contribution plan that is suitable to their particular situation.

Any such plan might work like this:

First, take care of basic group expenses (rent, refreshments, AA literature and a prudent reserve fund).

Divide the remaining funds according to whatever formula suits your local needs. For example:

50% to your intergroup or central office

30% to General Service Office
Box 459, Grand Cent. Station
New York, NY 10163

10% to District

10% to
Maryland General Service

Elkridge, MD 21075

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