

MARGENSER NEWSLETTER

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



3rd QUARTER 2002

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

BARBARA B.

The reading for today, July 20th, in our Daily Reflections book is: "But now the words of myself I am nothing, the Father doeth the works began to carry bright promise and meaning. (Reprinted from the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pg.75.)" How appropriate when I am trying to put Step 7 into action and ask my Higher Power to remove my shortcomings in the hope that what emerges is the person able to fulfill the duties and responsibilities as your chairman.

This year we got off to a great start and, together, we showed great enthusiasm when it came to preparing Victor for the 52nd General Service Conference. For those who participated, we had a very successful Mini-Conference in Easton. And for many of us, we also enjoyed a highly rewarding and successful State Convention in Hagerstown. I am now looking for suggestions and planning ways to continue to stimulate interest in the work Area 29 does to help carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. We can continue to show how service work can add a rich dimension to a sober life and to find ways to personally communicate the importance of service work. The job for all GSRs, DCMs, Officers, and Committee Chairs is to share this message with passion at meetings and with those we sponsor.

I also want to encourage using workbooks, service kits, videos, and our literature as tools for better communicating the messages they contain and as guardians of our Traditions. Because this is so important, I plan to make the showing of our videos and a discussion of our literature a part of at the December Assembly in Hagerstown. I encourage our members to bring visitors to this and to all of our assemblies.

We need to start reviewing our budgets to make sure that Officers and Committees have the ability to perform their service without being limited by personal finances. Committee leaders should be ready with their budgets at the November Committee meeting. Also, I should have the dates for 2003 ready by our next assembly.

It is my hope to be a part of a great leadership team, to work closely with Area Officers and Committee Chairs to make our Assemblies and Committee meetings informative and purposeful. I am open to any and all recommendations from our members, and my experience has been that together we can meet our goals. I believe with all my heart that the spirit of love and service will emerge from our unity, and my belief is affirmed by the practicing of our Three Legacies: Recovery, Service, and Unity.

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.

THE TWELVE STEPS – A PATH FOR LIVING

BY TOM R.

Until I came in to the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, I had no direction in life. The goals and dreams of my youth went quickly with my first drink of alcohol. I finally found what I was looking for, or so I thought. I was later to learn that what had taken over my life was called an obsession to drink. During the last several years of my drinking, I had pushed everyone out of my life and prayed only for death. I felt spiritually and emotionally dead already. Several attempts to stop drinking had failed. Nothing worked, and I had no idea how to live and not drink.

After two weeks of meetings, I summoned the courage to ask a man to be my sponsor. The first suggestion he made was to go home and read page 30 in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, and then the next day tell him what I had gotten out of it. Page 30 described the first Step, and how I had held on to the idea that I could control my drinking. It described "that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics." The next few pages described every way I had tried to control my drinking, and exactly how I had felt. I finally accepted the fact that I was an alcoholic. I cannot drink safely.

The longer I didn't drink and went to meetings, it became more apparent that if I didn't continue working through the Steps, nothing else was going to change, and I was not going to grow in sobriety. I had tried not drinking

without AA and remained miserable. I feared that resentments would serve as excuses to drink again. Pain, the great motivator, drove me into continuing with the Steps. Again, my sponsor showed me where in the Big Book to find the Steps and suggested that the way to do them is just the way they are laid out in the book.

All I wanted when I came to Alcoholics Anonymous was to not drink. What I receive is so much more, and I believe it is a direct result of the Twelve Steps. I accepted a higher power and relinquished control to that power. What a weight off my shoulders! I became glaringly aware of character defects, and I allow others to point them out to me as they resurface. I ask for help and vigilance that nothing stand between sobriety and me. I do not have to live or feel the way I used to. I pray for direction and come to meetings to hear the answer. I began to learn patience, tolerance, and acceptance. I use the Serenity Prayer every day! And, I try to convey this message of recovery as I can.

I feel that quality in sobriety and life comes with what I am doing today, right now in the moment, using the Twelve Steps as a guide for living. Recovery is a continuous process for me. If I get away from that, I can just go right back to my misery, thank you! I now learn how to live sober, and on a daily basis, a happy and full life by applying the principles offered in the Twelve Steps.

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

CHAIRPERSON BILL H.

During this year's Area 29 Annual State Convention, the Archives Committee made its presence known by a rather modest but extensive display of some of the remembrances of Alcoholics Anonymous' early beginnings in Maryland.

There were five stand-up displays, three large ones and two smaller ones, presenting various topics from the Towson Women's Group to the two early members of AA who are buried in Maryland.

Dan N., the co-chairperson for the Archive Committee, was ever-present throughout the weekend, offering his expertise on the displays and making sure that they were always accessible and user friendly.

There were also four full tables displaying a variety of mementos spanning the past 60 years of AA in Maryland. These included an original copy of the March 1, 1941, Saturday Evening Post magazine that contained the Jack Alexander article. A copy of an article in the

Hagerstown Newspaper describing the 1st State Convention held in the 60's was on hand, as well as various AA books signed by Bill W., pictures of early AA members in Area 29, and a list of all the past Delegates. And that was only the tip of the iceberg.

Our current Delegate, Victor L., had a display of his trip to the most recent General Service Conference in April 2002 (Panel 52).

All in all, there was quite a showing of material that documented some of the history of AA in Area 29. But we have more to display and also need everyone's help in gathering historic material. If you have any copies of past Annual State Conventions or Fall Conferences or any material that you feel represents the history of AA in Area 29, please contact Bill H.

I will do my best to make sure that the material is preserved for the posterity of AA in Maryland.

THE STRUCTURE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

The following is an excerpt of a presentation by Barbara B. given at the History and Structure of Alcoholics Anonymous Workshop, which took place in District 31.

The groups are the heart and soul of AA, and in keeping with Traditions Four and Nine, these groups are autonomous and will never be organized from the outside. The service of AA, which enables the groups to do things they could not do by themselves, requires some organization.

Your group probably has a secretary, a treasurer, a literature person, a coffee maker and hopefully a general service representative, affectionately known as the GSR. The GSRs meet at the district and area levels to elect district committee members and, ultimately, a delegate to the General Service Conference, where the group conscience of AA as a whole is reached. The Conference directs the service entities of AA. The General Service Board is described in the Concepts as "the chief service arm of the Conference." This means that the groups, through the delegates, direct the 21 trustees of the Board. Individual AA members, through their groups, are the bosses and, hopefully, trust the elected servants of the Fellowship.

Clearly, Alcoholics Anonymous does not have an organizational structure. What we really have is a service structure that does two basic things: First, it gives a voice to the Higher Power that guides our fellowship as a whole – the loving voice that we know as the group conscience. Second, it enables AA's message of recovery to reach the still suffering alcoholic in places and in ways not available to the individual AA.

The service structure is frequently described as an inverted triangle, with all the groups at the top. The groups themselves have the ultimate responsibility for the well-being and growth of the fellowship. This is passed on through a series of delegations to a more manageable size group of trusted servants. The baton of delegation and responsibility passes from GSR to DCM to Delegate to the Conference, becoming the effective voice of the Higher Power. Although the Conference does not impose its actions on anyone, it does rely on the power of the Traditions to have them implemented.

In the late 1940's Bill W. realized that Dr. Bob and he could not live forever, and that some mechanism must be available to lead Alcoholics Anonymous prior to their departure. Bill had drafted the Twelve Traditions in 1946, and although they did not gain wide acceptance at first, the Traditions have provided the framework for the survival of our fellowship. These traditions, coupled with the General Service Conference, have provided the backbone for our evolution and growth. In 1962, Bill wrote the Twelve Concepts for World Service, an interpretation of AA's world service structure. Their intent is to record "the why" of our structure in a manner that benefits AA's future with experiences of the past.

The general service structure provides the leadership that was once exercised by Bill and Dr. Bob. The leadership is provided from individual members and groups through the rotating body of trusted servants who function as a body of peers without a hierarchy. We are a fellowship of equals.

Members of a district, area, conference, or board have no individual authority over another member. Only when we function as an elected member of the body we serve, do we have any authority. That delegated authority is granted to the service body rather than individually to its members. The goal of these many efforts is to carry a message of recovery to the alcoholic who still suffers and to ensure that future alcoholics have the same opportunity for recovery in our Fellowship that we did.

As outlined in our Service Manual on pages S16 and S17, the structure of AA is how we stay in constant communication with each other to keep a balance between ultimate authority and responsibility. The communication process starts with the group. Its group conscience is passed to its GSR regarding change, approval, or disapproval of a proposed action. This ensures that the group's voice is heard at the district and area levels and, ultimately, becomes part of the delegate's voice at the Conference. After each annual Conference the GSR is responsible for making sure that the group members are informed about what went on at the Conference. Groups are organized into districts, which are a collection of groups located geographically close to each other. The GSRs of these groups select a DCM who becomes part of the area committee and a vital link between the GSRs and the Fellowship as a whole.

The US and Canada are divided into 93 areas, each holding an assembly to elect a Delegate to represent it at the Conference. We are in Area 29, which encompasses all the counties in Maryland except the 2 that border the District of Columbia. Those two counties are in Area 13. In addition to the delegate, we have 4 other elected officers: Alt-Delegate, Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer. They serve for a 2-year period known as a panel. This past October we elected our officers to serve on Panel 52, which corresponds with the 52nd General Service Conference, which is held each April. The Annual Conference is made up of area delegates, trustees, directors of AA World Services and the Grapevine, and AA staff members of the GSO and Grapevine.

There is a General Service Board made up of 21 trustees; 7 are non-alcoholic Class A and 14 are alcoholic Class B, 8 of whom also serve as regional trustees. The General Service Board is responsible for two other boards it operates. These are the AAWS (Alcoholics Anonymous World Service) board, which runs the publishing and service operations of AA at the General Service Office. GSO has a general manager and 10-12 staff members who are AA members. Each staff member works with one of the trustees committees, most of which have a counterpart committee of delegates from the Conference. The other corporate board is the Grapevine, responsible for our meeting in print. The Grapevine has an executive editor, senior editor, and circulations manager, who are also members of our fellowship.

The General Service Board and its committees meet three times a year and work with the GSO and Grapevine staff members to carry out the needs of the Fellowship as expressed by the Conference. Advisory Actions, passed by two-thirds of

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THE TOWSON WOMEN'S GROUP

LOVE AND SERVICE OVER 40 YEARS

BILL H.

On a quiet Friday night in March, I rushed to keep an appointment that I had made with two members from the Towson Women's Group. I had just left the Baltimore Institution Committee and was trying desperately to be on time. I arrived at Georgetta E's home and was greeted by Georgetta and her fellow member, Doris R. They welcomed me with open arms and turned the next hour or two into a magical excursion into that mix of love, service, commitment, and fellowship known as the Towson Women's Group.

Georgetta and Doris then proceeded to weave memories of that tapestry that is AA, as seen through eyes of two members of the oldest Women's AA group in Area 29 – Maryland. (Georgetta has 35 years of sobriety and Doris 37 years.)

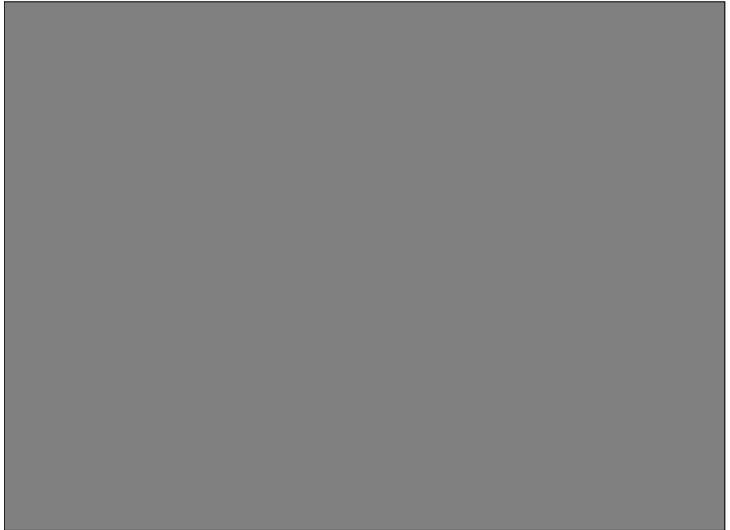
The Towson Women's Group was founded in the spring of 1961 by Anne P., Isabelle K., Enid S. and Rowena M. The first meeting place was at 212 Washington Avenue, Towson, Maryland. From its small beginnings in 1961, the group grew to 34 active members in 1971 and was at its peak at 48 members in 1984. The group currently has 24 active members.

The group was active in Intergroup, 12-step work, area service, and institutions. Towson Women's Group brought the first AA meetings to Shepherd Pratt, the House of Good Shepherd, and Jessup's Women's Prison.

Looking at the pictures from the past with Georgetta and Doris, I could see the love and sadness in their eyes as they talked about past members no longer with us in person, but always in our hearts and our actions. Their legacy went into the formation of unwritten traditions that go hand in hand with the written ones that keep AA solid and growing.

Before I enter into a paragraph or two about one of the founding members, Anne P., I want to point out that the Towson Women's Group is not Anne P. or Georgetta or Doris. It is that combination of all past and present members, some deceased, some living, some sober and some not, who gave their blood, sweat, and tears to establish, and then continue on, that collage of AA love and service known as the Towson Women's Group.

Many stories flowed around about Anne P., one of the original four, who was instrumental in establishing and carrying on the traditions of this particular group. She was that blend of love and strength that could melt your heart or knock you down, whatever was needed to keep AA and the Towson Women's Group afloat. Anne P. had been known over the years to stand toe to toe for "her girls" and was known on several occasions to stand up against what was politically incorrect at the time and fight



*Towson Women's Group 20 th Anniversary (with their animals)
Georgetta E., Anne P., Isabelle K, Rowena M*

physically for one of her girls. She also had wit and charm about her. When some of the women got in a little pity party, Anne would pack them up and take them down to the Old Chip House in Baltimore, which offered hard core, low bottom, tough love AA. It was an experience you didn't want to miss.

Another little tradition, particular only to this home group, is that Anne gave every home group member an animal nickname. She would make cards for the members for their anniversary and for Christmas. She would cut out intricate little figures of the member's specific animal and paste them on the card. Georgetta (kangaroo) and Doris (pony) gave me two cards that were over 30 years old.

Close your eyes and you can still see them: the hen, the beaver, the deer, the pony, the kangaroo, the cat, the fish, and on and on. You can feel their presence and feel safe and secure. You're in the presence of a true AA home group, that close knit family that started out with Bill and Bob (with Anne and Lois right nearby) and has blossomed into groups that cover the four corners of the earth – Love and Service with that extra little pinch of compassion and tenderness.

Towson Women's Group hasn't been without controversy over the years, especially since they are solely a women's meeting. They battled that issue and also the court issue and came out strong and united since all issues were decided as they should be, with guidance from General Service and the final outcome determined by the individual group conscience. I can assure you that if a man would stumble into the Towson Group for a meeting,

Continued on Page 7

NERC

2002

October
4 ~ 6
2002

Sheraton South Portland Hotel South Portland ME

Sharing our



Steps

Traditions



Traditions

Concepts



Concepts

Convention
Flag Ceremony • Workshops • A.A. Speaker Meetings
Marathon Meetings • Banquet • Dances

Hotel Amenities
Indoor Heated Pool • Health Club • Saunas
Across from Maine's Largest Shopping Mall
Al-Anon Participation • Lots of coffee and Fellowship
Signing for the Hearing Impaired

Hotel Registration
Reservations must be received by September 11, 2002

Name _____ Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Sharing room with: _____ Departure Date: _____

PACKAGE 1
2 nights lodging, 2 breakfasts and 2 dinners
single \$382.00
double \$732.75
triple \$103.50
quadruple \$178.75

PACKAGE 2
Friday Dinner
★ Bake Stuffed Chicken Breast
★ Bake Stuffed Ham
Saturday Breakfast, Banquet
★ Prime Rib or Swordfish
Sunday Breakfast
 PACKAGE 3
Saturday Breakfast, Banquet
★ Prime Rib or Swordfish
Sunday Breakfast
 PACKAGE 4
Saturday Banquet
★ Prime Rib or Swordfish

PACKAGE 5
Saturday Delegate/Alt. Delegate Luncheon Buffet
Sunday Luncheon Buffet
(not offered in any other package, must be purchased separately)
Payment must be received by September 11, 2002. TOTAL \$17.75

Non-Smoking Handicapped
Check-in time: 3:00 p.m. Check-out time: 12:00 p.m.

Check, Money Order, or Credit Card
Deposit for first night's stay must accompany registration.
Check/Money Order \$ _____ Credit Card _____

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Mail to: Sheraton South Portland Hotel
363 Maine Mall Road
South Portland, ME 04106
Or Call: Sheraton South Portland Hotel (888-627-7188)

For More Information please contact: AA
★ AA
★ Al-Anon
★ Delegate...Panel # _____
★ Alt. Delegate
★ Trainer

Reservations by _____

Name _____ Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Telex _____

Directions to the Sheraton
Take Exit 7 off the Maine Turnpike

Conference Registration Fee: \$20.00 Per Person. Please register early and make checks payable to:
NERC 2002 • PO Box 899 • Bath, ME 04530

The 18th Annual Area 29 Fall Conference

Hosted by Maryland General Service

BUILDING A NEW LIFE



October 24, 25, 26, 27, 2002
Hagerstown, MD
Clarion Hotel & Conference Center
(FORMERLY RAMADA INN)

A.A. with Al-Anon and Alateen Participation

A.A. Speakers
Ken D. California, Nancy K. New Jersey, Vince Y. California, Pat Y. California, Jack C. Maryland, Angie D. California, Shirley K. California

Al-Anon Speakers
Khayriyah A. Virginia, Shirley T. Oregon

Thursday, October 24	Friday, October 25	Saturday, October 26	Sunday, October 27
12:00 pm Registration opens 12:00 pm Hospitality Room Opens 12:00 pm MGS Room Opens 12:00 pm Lunch (on your own) 4:00 pm A.A. Speaker Meeting 5:00 pm A.A. Alateen Starts 6:00 pm Dinner (on your own) 8:00 pm A.A. Speaker Meeting 9:30 pm Board Games & Ice Cream Station	7:30 am Continental Breakfast 8:00 am Registration 9:30 am A.A. Speaker Meeting 11:00 am Al-Anon Speaker Meeting 11:00 am **Children's Arts & Crafts 1:30 pm Traditions Play 1:30 pm Al-Anon Workshop 2:45 pm A.A. Workshop 2:45 pm Al-Anon Workshop 4:00 pm A.A. Workshop 6:00 pm Buffet Dinner 6:30 pm **Children's Costume Contest 8:00 pm A.A. Speaker Meeting 9:00 pm Ice Cream Station (Cash Sales) 10:00 pm Halloween Costume Dance	7:30 am *Buffet Breakfast 8:00 am Registration 9:30 am A.A. Speaker Meeting 11:00 am Al-Anon Speaker Meeting 11:00 am **Children's Arts & Crafts 1:30 pm Joint A.A./Al-Anon Workshop 2:45 pm A.A. Workshop 2:45 pm Al-Anon Workshop 4:00 pm A.A. Workshop 6:00 pm *Conference Banquet Dinner 7:30 pm MGS Presentation 8:00 pm A.A. Speaker Meeting 8:00 pm Alateen Meeting/ Pizza Party 9:30 pm Ice Cream Station (Cash Sales) 10:00 pm DJ Dance	7:30 am *Buffet Breakfast 9:00 am Last Alateen 10:00 am A.A. Speaker Meeting 11:00 am Conference Closing

*A.A. Alateens are Open. Discussion Meetings which run 24-hour continuously throughout the Conference. Meetings are 50 minutes in length, and begin on the hour, with 2-hour breaks during the A.A. Speaker Meetings.

**Registration for meals required
**All Children's Activities requires parental/guardian supervision

Conference Attendees please register in Convention Center Lobby upon arrival
Admittance to all Conference Functions requires an Identification Name Badge
Handicap and Wheelchair Accessible Interpretation for the Hearing Impaired

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

PLEASE PRINT

Name: _____ Address: _____
Phone: Day _____ Evening _____
Email Address: _____ (For confirmation purposes)

Attending: A.A. Al-Anon Alateen Other

1. REGISTRATION(S) _____ x \$18.00 = \$ _____

2. MEALS
Friday Continental Breakfast _____ x \$6.00 = \$ _____
Friday Buffet Dinner _____ x \$11.00 = \$ _____
Saturday Buffet Breakfast _____ x \$18.00 = \$ _____
Saturday Banquet Buffet Dinner _____ x \$22.00 = \$ _____
Sunday Buffet Breakfast _____ x \$11.00 = \$ _____
Meals Subtotal \$ _____

Special Dietary Request: _____

3. ONE NIGHT ROOM DEPOSIT _____ x \$72.00 = \$ _____

**TOTAL ENCLOSED (1, 2, & 3) \$ _____

LODGING REGISTRATION
(Lodging registration to attend conference)
\$72.00 Flat Rate per night per room
One night room rent required as a deposit
Hotels requires 72 hours notice to cancel a reservation
Clarion Hotel, Hampton Inn, Comfort Suites
Rooms reserved on a first come first serve basis

Primary Hotel Choice _____
Secondary Hotel Choice _____
Check Arrival Date: Thursday (Oct. 24)
 Friday (Oct. 25)
 Saturday (Oct. 26)

Number of Nights: _____
Number of Beds: _____
Number of Persons: _____
Special Room Request: _____ (Not guaranteed)

No reservations accepted after September 24, 2002
Please check if applicable:
 Hearing Impaired Wheelchair Access
 Handicap Assistance

Sorry, No Credit Cards Accepted for Registration

**Please make checks payable to and mail to: MGS Fall Conference, Box 184, Woodstock, MD 21163

Conference registration confirmation will be mailed upon receipt of the above form and payment

Other available activities:
Swimming Pool, Health Spa, Putting Green, Shuffle Board, Hagerstown Area Points of Interest

MENU

Friday: Continental Breakfast \$6.00
7:30 am - 9:00 am
Assorted Chilled Fruit Juices, Breakfast Breads
Fresh Brewed Regular and Decaf Coffee and Hot Tea

Friday: Buffet Dinner \$18.00
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm
The Lieutenant's Buffet
Tossed Garden Salad with Assorted Dressings
Fried Chicken, Roast Sirloin of Beef
Chef's Choice of Potato and Vegetable
Warm Rolls and Butter
Assorted Cakes and Pies
Freshly Brewed Regular and Decaf Coffee, Hot Tea and Iced Tea

Saturday: Breakfast \$11.00
7:30 am - 9:00 am
The Gettysburg Buffet
Assorted Chilled Fruit Juices, Sliced Seasonal Fresh Fruit
Basket of Homemade Breakfast Breads
Scrambled Eggs, Home Fried Potatoes, Ham
Fresh Brewed Regular and Decaf Coffee and Hot Tea

Saturday: Banquet Buffet Dinner \$22.00
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm
The Colonel's Buffet
Tossed Garden Salad with Choice of Dressings
Tri-colored Pasta Salad
Sautéed Seasonal Vegetables, Rice Pilaf
Sliced London Broil and Seafood Newburg
Warm Rolls and Butter
Assorted Cakes and Pies
Freshly Brewed Regular and Decaf Coffee, Hot Tea and Iced Tea

Sunday: Breakfast \$11.00
7:30 am - 9:30 am
Sunrise Buffet
Scrambled Eggs, Bacon, Sausage, Country Fried Potatoes
French Toast Sticks with Maple Syrup
Freshly Baked Biscuits
Fresh Brewed Regular and Decaf Coffee and Hot Tea

STRUCTURE OF AA

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

the membership of the Conference are directives to the Board, which works extremely hard to carry them out.

This talk of General Service that we hear so much about from so many AA members; this level of service they call their lifeblood, is us. We are the General Service. The numerous regional and area functions meeting this weekend throughout the United States and Canada are General Service, as well as the General Service Office in New York. The many district and group workshops and sharing sessions being conducted this very moment are the General Service. To get the most out of recovery, be curious about all aspects of AA. Ask questions, remembering that the only dumb question is the one not asked. Share your experiences and get to know us for the fallible human beings that we are. We are all struggling for progress in helping our marvelous Fellowship grow and become increasingly more effective.



GRAPEVINE NEWS AND i-say INFO*

Maybe it's because it's summertime in our part of the world (hot and lazy), but the following brief sentiments seem appropriate to share. Put up your "Gone Fishin'" sign and reflect on what has been "Heard at Meetings" from the i-Say Forum. Go ahead and post your own:

<http://www.aagrapevine.org/BBIdeas.html>

"A Big Book that is falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't."

"Say what you mean, mean what you say, don't say it mean."

Acronym for Denial : Don't Even Notice I Am Lying

"I have accepted that I am a child of God, but I am resentful that I am not an only child."

"Courage is the willingness to accept fear and act anyway."

"Thinking about taking the first drink is like asking a bear to dance. The dance isn't over until the bear stops dancing."

"In sobriety, the extraordinary becomes ordinary, and the ordinary becomes extraordinary."

Keep your eyes open for the August issue, which has some amazing stories about close encounters of the sober kind.

Check out some of them at:

<http://www.aagrapevine.org/toc.html>

If you are a Grapevine Rep for your area, district or home group (or want to be) there are exciting developments on our web site, one of which is The GrapeNet on-line -- a password accessible bulletin board solely for our GvRs.

<http://www.aagrapevine.org/gvrtxt.html>

That's all for now. Please remember that if you would like to be removed from our e-mail list, just put REMOVE ME in the subject category and return to sender.

Best Regards,

The Grapevine Web Manager

* This article is an excerpt from the July 2002 Grapevine.

DISTRICT 36

CHAIRPERSON DENNIS B.

From the AA Service Manual: "Our Twelfth Step – carrying the message – is the basic service that the AA Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence." Service work and carrying the message are alive and well in St. Mary's County, and the work within District 36 is just a small piece of AA in Southern Maryland. District 36 meets at 6:30 PM, 24494 Clark's Landing Road, Hollywood, MD on the second Tuesday of every month. If you are in the area, please drop in. Meetings for the remainder of 2002 will be held on August 13, September 10, October 8, November 12, and December 10. You can reach us at Post Office Box 1334, California, Maryland 20619-1334.

There are 27 registered AA groups in District 36 and three new meetings that have started in the last two months and are not included in the latest Where and When:

- Fresh Start, 7:30 - 8:30 AM, Monday thru Friday, Winner's Circle, Great Mills Rd, Lexington Park
- Fourth Dimension, 5:00 – 6:00 PM, Monday thru Friday, Winner's Circle, Great Mills Rd, Lexington Park
- Living Sober Study, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM, Saturday, Winner's Circle, Great Mills Rd, Lexington Park

Since January 2002, we have averaged 17 people at our District meetings, representing 12 groups. At the meeting, reports are given by our five standing committees: Correction and Treatment, Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community, Archives, Telephone, and Newcomer Packets. One Concept is presented by a General Service Representative or by one of the District Officers. We have a roll call of the groups present, and GSRs have the opportunity to report on their respective groups.

Finally, we have two workshops that are taking final form to be presented in August and October:

- Bridging the Gap Workshop, August 24, 2002, 1:00 - 5:00 PM, at the College of Southern Maryland
- Home Group Workshop, Saturday, October 5, 2002, 1:00 - 4:00 PM, Lexington Park United Methodist Church

For many years, I thought things happened by magic in AA. Now I'm sure of it. And that magic is evident every day in the AA members who provide service without fanfare and without reward, so the hand of AA can be there when anyone reaches out for it. It is a real pleasure to be able to work with such people!

TOWSON WOMEN'S GROUP

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

directories would fly and this tight knit group would make sure that the person found an AA meeting nearby.

This group truly represents all that there is good about Alcoholics Anonymous. It has been a home and haven for many women who, for some reason or another, just did not feel comfortable in a smoke-filled room full of men. A need for this meeting existed in Maryland, and the Towson Women's Group has filled this need admirably. Every member of the Towson Women's Group made a conscious decision to allow themselves to be a conduit for their Higher Power to use them in whatever manner He or She may wish. Through practicing the traditions and steps on a daily basis, they made themselves available to be instrumental in the growth of AA in Maryland.

I can't describe in words how beautiful, humbling, and spiritual it was to share those few hours with two of the most delightful AA members that it has ever been my privilege to meet. Honesty, dignity, mutual respect and laughter made up this evening of time travel in the history of AA in Maryland.

Thank you, Towson Women's Group, for being there for the suffering alcoholic who may have fallen by the wayside had you not had the courage and foresight to carry the message of Bill and Bob to those who were afraid and alone.

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
c/o Nancy K

Elkridge, MD 21075

MARGENSER NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 465
VALLEY LEE, MD 20692

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

STANDARD RATE
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