

# MARGENSER

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

## Passing Along the Actions of Gratitude

Patricia R  
Area 29 General Service Chairperson

Why is it that our gratitude speaks more in our voices than in our actions? I see an enormous number of newcomers uninvolved in the groups, basically sitting on the edge of AA. They seem to be in limbo between recovery and active alcoholism. It is up to those of us that live a life of recovery to help welcome and guide them in the program of recovery.

I was taught early in my sobriety that gratitude is an action word. My gratitude speaks when I am actively helping AA by doing work (dare I say work?). The expression "Let it begin with me" floats through my head, reminding me that my recovery is my responsibility. It reminds me that my primary purpose is to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. The manner in which I do this varies from day to day. However, there is one constant in my recovery – that is SERVICE.

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## Delegate's Corner: Sharing the "We" of Service

Barbara B  
Area 29 Delegate

As my first year as your Panel 56 Delegate comes to a close, and the challenges of this first year pass with it, I am reminded more now than ever that this is a "we" program and that a power greater than ourselves is walking with us through it. I emerge from this first year with an overwhelming sense of gratitude for the many sober members of Alcoholics Anonymous who have shared this service journey with me.

Our DCMs, GSRs, and other AA members came together for our Regional Panels, discussing the General Service Conference Agenda Items and bringing the Area's conscience of those discussions to our Mini-Conference in Salisbury. Past and present Delegates from all over the US and Canada, GSO and Grapevine Staff and Directors, and our Class A and Class B Trustees warmly welcomed me, offering their experience and their assistance throughout my first year.

I realize only a few AA members get the chance to experience the General Service Conference, but my hope is that I was

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## Get Out of the Box

Larry H, DCM, District 31

I have to be grateful that in the very early days after I joined Alcoholics Anonymous, I had a sponsor who had been sober twenty-seven years, had helped hundreds of alcoholics get sober, and who continuously seemed to impart great wisdom to me. He always managed to keep it simple for me, although even then I sometimes "didn't get it."

But a few things he hit me with right from the beginning were: "Stick with the winners," "Meeting makers make it," "Get out of yourself and do some service work," and "Find a good home group." Although I hear people say their sponsors never told them what to do, I recall his words more as directions and instructions rather than suggestions. He told me I didn't have to pick a meeting that he liked and attended as my home group. He said you attend different meetings until you find one with a lot of long-term sobriety and with people who shake your hand and welcome you. The important thing, he said, was for me to be comfortable with the meeting and the

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## 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.

## An Intergroup Day of Sharing

Bob C, Alternate MGS Intergroup Liaison

Twenty-three AA service workers converged in Timonium for an "Intergroup Day of Sharing," sponsored by the Baltimore Intergroup Office and MGS's Intergroup Liaison Committee, on Nov. 4, 2006. Four of Maryland's ten intergroups were represented by 12 service workers. Eleven attendees came from MGS.

We started at 10:00 AM with reports from the 21st Annual Intergroup/Central Office/AAWS Seminar in Akron (The cost to attend the seminar is \$600 to \$1000 per person, depending on location. Next year's seminar will be in Oklahoma City).

The three panelists (Susan K, Baltimore Intergroup Office Coordinator; Tom R, Alt. Delegate; and Julie K, West Central Intergroup Office Coordinator), who all attended the Akron seminar, shared that the experience helped them do their service jobs better. Frank M, Office Coordinator for the North Eastern Maryland Intergroup (NEMDIG), who has attended several such seminars, shared his view that they are vital to his service work.

The Q/A session that followed focused on liability insurance for AA groups meeting in churches, which is increasingly required by insurance companies. Groups have been asking intergroups and MGS whether the service entities' insurance can cover them. The answer involves both Traditions and practical considerations: (a) Groups are autonomous. If a service entity covered them financially, it could tell the groups what to do; (b) Insurance policies cover only the insured. In the case of intergroups or MGS, this does not include groups. The panelists shared relevant experience from the Akron seminar. Some groups ask the church to buy an insurance rider (generally \$30-\$50 per year), which the group reimburses. Other groups have explained that they are autonomous, not legally part of an organization, and as a small group cannot buy an insurance policy.

Next came the workshop "Sharing Experiences – Intergroups and General Services." I shared on the purposes of the Intergroup Liaison Committee and the Day of Sharing: to promote communication, cooperation, and unity between the Intergroups and MGS. AA Tradition doesn't discourage intergroup/area cooperation, since each is responsible to the groups and neither is an outside enterprise. The Committee can share intergroup concerns with the Area Delegate, who

expresses our collective group conscience at the General Service Conference. Conference actions, such as changes in literature and shipping policies, frequently affect intergroups even more directly than they do districts and areas.

The questions "What does MGS do for my intergroup?" and "What do intergroups do for MGS?" would be well replaced with "How can WE cooperate to help still-suffering alcoholics?"

Catherine T, MGS Intergroup Liaison, then led a brainstorming session, with small groups listing ways in which districts and intergroups can cooperate. In the subsequent group reports, ideas fell into three categories:

- **Joint workshops:** Our Three Legacies; sponsorship; involving groups and members in intergroups and districts; what intergroups and districts do; service fairs; joint inventories on intergroup/district relationships and communication.
- **Social events:** "Sober road trips" to Akron, Stepping Stones, GSO and meetings in other cities; picnics/dinners/dances, especially with strong program components (meetings or workshops).
- **Cooperation between representatives of intergroups and districts:** H&I, Treatment Facilities Committee and CPC/PI work; helping new groups; cooperation on websites; joint visits to groups by members of intergroups and districts.

At 12:15, John M served an excellent \$5 meal, and many people ate with new friends from the small groups. Several exhibits were set up and received visitors at lunch and during breaks. John J, MGS Archives Chair, presented his archives display; Jim S of West Central Intergroup set up a CPC booth; and Pete S of NEMDIG and MGS had a PI display.

We reconvened at 1 PM for another workshop, "AA in a Changing World – Electronic Media and the Traditions," led by three panelists: Harold G, MGS Archivist; Pete S, NEMDIG PI Chair and MGS PI Co-chair; and Eva H, MGS Webmaster.

Harold reminded us that the Internet and World Wide Web are public media, which invokes Tradition 11. Bill W called anonymity the most important Tradition because it's the great equalizer and ego-deflator. A great challenge to anyone using the Internet is controlling its exponential ability to transmit personal information. In this context, the panelists discussed ways electronic media should be used carefully to transmit our message. We should:

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## A Different Kind of Sponsorship

Anonymous

I sponsored her before she relapsed. We attended a Big Book Study together. She had once done a lot of service work, but her focus started to shift. Work and a relationship took the place of meetings and service. The relapse took its toll...loss of "the" relationship, family relationships, job, home, self, freedom. Once incarcerated, reality hit. It was time to surrender once more.

I received a letter as a plea for help. Would I still be her sponsor? You bet. But this was new to me. How do I sponsor someone who is incarcerated and cannot share face-to-face or even on the phone? By mail of course! And so it began.

I drew upon "An Unofficial Guide to the Twelve Steps," written by AA members in Texas and edited by Paul O. The pamphlet is free, "mailed free of charge to persons interested in actually DOING the Twelve Steps of the Alcoholics Anonymous program." Producing the pamphlet depends solely on contributions. Although suggested as a tool for groups, it would work nicely for our purpose, with a little modification.

With each letter, a reading from the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, was recommended. Each assignment included a list of questions to answer and would be completed and mailed back to me before providing the next assignment. Although time consuming, this became a valuable tool. My letters began with news from home and comments on the last assignment. A good deal of thought and effort went into each response I received and each assignment I sent in return. Fellow inmates, I discovered, were also able to use the assignments to enhance their step work.

When it came time to do Step 3, I was perplexed. This was the step I most enjoyed taking with my sponsees; but I had to recommend that a close, understanding friend or the prison chaplain be sought out. God intervened and gave me the opportunity to take a meeting into the prison right at that time. We not only received the blessing of time before the meeting to discuss Step 3, but also the distinct privilege of sharing a moving and personal Third Step prayer with outside AAs who regularly took the meeting into the prison, as well as fellow inmates who stood to benefit from the experience.

We have completed a very thorough Step 4, which took three mailings. We used The Fourth Step Sheets, which are popular today, but modified them to more closely follow the instructions of the Big Book.

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In my heart of hearts, I recognize that service work has helped me stay sober. Thankfully, I was taught in early sobriety that my life depended on how I treat my disease. I was taught to listen to the winners in AA and take suggestions. As the Big Book discusses, I listened as only the dying can.

I need to introduce newcomers to the many facets of recovery. Besides the Steps, one of the most important facets is to guide them toward becoming active in their recovery through service work at the group level. I was taught that if I wanted recovery, I had to get involved. I had to get in the middle of the bed.

I fondly recall how important my coffee-making position was to me. I made coffee, prepared the meeting room, and met folks who arrived for the meeting before the meeting (I call those folks winners). Coffee-making opened a new door for my life in recovery. I was becoming a part of AA, not just sitting on the sidelines watching the others.

The winners saw that I was actively participating in my recovery and supported me emotionally and spiritually by listening to me and talking to me. Those folks became an important part of my recovering life. I respected the fact that they had put a tremendous number of days together without having a drink. I wanted what they had and continued to make coffee for my home group for a long time.

It was a short jump from coffee-maker to Alternate GSR, then GSR. Ask your sponsor about these terms, if you are not familiar with them. Service enriched my recovery, kept me coming back when I didn't want to, and helped me learn about myself through working with others. I urge you to help guide newcomers in this rewarding experience of service. ▲

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My sponsee is being released in a few weeks. We are saving the Fifth Step work to do face-to-face. If this had not been possible, we would have continued the step work in writing. For now we are writing to discuss her options after release and to make plans for future work in AA.

This experience has been very rewarding for me and has helped me to grow in usefulness to my sponsee and, I believe, future sponsees. Where there is a will, my Higher Power has a way. ▲

## Are We Keeping Our Traditions Alive?

Anonymous

Early in our history as a society of recovering alcoholics, Bill W realized that an effective group of Traditions was necessary, as he put it, to bring "order, coherence, and effective functioning out of noisy anarchy which for a time threatened us with collapse." (*The Language of the Heart*, p 248)

The Traditions took form in AA's period of rapid growth after the publication of Jack Alexander's article on AA in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1941. Bill wrote in 1960 that the principle of unity was at the core of the Traditions:

"The Twelve Traditions communicate our principles of unity as the Twelve Steps communicate our principles of recovery. The Traditions show how an AA member can best relate himself to his group, the group to other groups, and AA's experience in matters of authority and money; they guard against compromising alliances, professionalism, and our very natural desires for personal public acclaim. The Twelve Traditions were slowly evolved during an era when large-scale publicity was causing new groups to spring up like popcorn on a hot griddle.... The Traditions are neither rules, regulations, nor laws. No sanctions or punishments can be invoked for their infraction. Perhaps in no other area of society would these principles succeed. Yet in the Fellowship of alcoholics, the enforceable Traditions carry a power greater than that of law." (*The Language of the Heart*, pp 248-49)

Both Bill and Dr. Bob realized that the Traditions would forever be at the core of AA. Before the 1950 Cleveland convention, where the Traditions were unanimously approved, Dr. Bob and Bill knew that a new order was inevitable. As Bill wrote, "The old order was changing. In the future we could no longer depend upon the authority and influence of our pioneering people for AA unity. Henceforth we would have to rely upon spiritual principles, as set forth in the Twelve Traditions." (*AA Comes of Age*, p 213)

It was felt that because the Traditions were "hammered out on the anvil of experience," they would remain vital to AA's existence and future growth. Bill also wrote in 1960 that "We obey our Traditions willingly because of the need for AA survival. We obey them because we ought to and because we want to. Perhaps the secret of their power lies in the fact that these life-giving communications spring out of living experience and are rooted in sacrificial love." (*The Language of the Heart*, p 249)

The question we should ask ourselves today – Are we keeping our Traditions alive? – is perhaps too big a question to answer in a general way. Each member of AA, in his or her heart, is a living expression of our Traditions in action, and it is through individual expression that our Traditions manifest themselves in the groups and the Fellowship's various service entities.

The First Tradition, along with the Twelfth, defines both the basic structure and the nature of our heart. We state that the overall health of the Fellowship is not just a good idea – it is vital to our personal recovery. We then insist that all of these Traditions are to be rooted in the spiritual foundation of anonymity. By reminding us to always place principles before personalities, and stressing first our common welfare, these two Traditions have served us well, and remain vitally alive.

Traditions Two, Four, Eight, and Nine reflect our early experience in the Fellowship in establishing lines of authority. Tradition Two says it all in the words "There is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as he may express Himself in our group conscience." Tradition Four establishes the autonomy of each group, "except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole." Tradition Eight makes the point that we are nonprofessionals, and Tradition Nine says "AA, as such, ought never be organized."

The common thread stitching these Traditions together, of course, is the primacy of a loving God expressing Himself in the group conscience.

These Traditions, showing us how to generate effective and legitimate authority, served the Fellowship well in its formative years, and they serve us exceedingly well in the new millennium. As Bill says in an article on Tradition Two in a 1948 *Grapevine*, "With respect to its own affairs, the collective conscience of the group will, given time, almost surely demonstrate its

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perfect dependability. The group conscience will, in the end, prove a far more infallible guide for group affairs than the decision of any individual member, however good or wise he may be.”

Traditions Three, Five, and Six stress singleness of purpose, and there certainly can be no question whatsoever as to the primary purpose of AA. The Third Tradition speaks of a definite membership requirement, the desire to stop drinking. The Fifth Tradition clearly and unequivocally states that each group has but one primary purpose, and that is to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. And Tradition Six tells us we “ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.” Our primary purpose, of course, is to carry AA’s message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Although these three Traditions could not be clearer regarding Alcoholics Anonymous’ purpose, AA’s historic attractiveness seems to be ever growing, and many group members speak of the necessity of reiterating, from time to time, the membership requirement to the Fellowship.

Tradition Seven assures us that money will always take its proper place in the Fellowship. In the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (p 165), Bill tells the story about the Fellowship’s early days and the temptation to accept outside contributions. But the right decision was finally made:

“...[O]ur trustees wrote a bright page of AA history. They declared for the principle that AA must always stay poor.... When these facts were printed, there was a profound reaction. To people familiar with endless drives for charitable funds, AA presented a strange and refreshing spectacle. Approving editorials here and abroad generated a wave of confidence in the integrity of Alcoholics Anonymous. They pointed out that the irresponsible had become responsible, and that by making financial independence part of its tradition, Alcoholics Anonymous had revived an ideal that its era had almost forgotten.” And the Tradition continues, from that point in our history until the present day, in groups throughout our AA world.

Traditions Ten and Eleven speak directly of our relationship to those outside the Fellowship. Ten states we have no opinion on outside issues, so we should never be drawn into public controversy; and Eleven reminds us that our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion, that we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.

Certainly, as the years have rolled by, we have noted many, many anonymity breaks – yet the Fellowship remains strong and unified. Although anonymity breaks are all too often observed at the level of press, radio, TV and films, the vast majority of AA members have proven to be exceedingly cooperative in observing this vital Tradition.

And Traditions Ten and Eleven led directly to Tradition Twelve and the realization that all our valued Traditions are founded on the principle and practice of anonymity.

So, are we keeping our Traditions alive? It does seem both just and prudent to suggest that yes, our Twelve Traditions are alive and well, functioning as those who put them together hoped and dreamed. Do we find perfect adherence to our Traditions? No, but this is a program of spiritual progress, not perfection. The Traditions are shining beacons, ever showing us the correct way. Without them, and the unity they engender, the darkness might overwhelm us. We keep them bright and alive today, with thanks to those who presented them to us, and with a promise to pass them on to those still to come. ▲

## The Holidays

Marty S, Hagerstown Group

It’s that time of year again when coping with the holidays seems to be a popular topic of discussion at meetings. Loneliness and depression are cited as difficult problems we alcoholics must contend with at this time of year. Judging from the media, depression at the holidays is a malady not confined to alcoholics, and numerous articles are often found in print media with suggestions on how to handle the holiday time.

I remember my first holiday time in sobriety. It was 1967, and I was young, only six months sober, and scared to death about getting through this time without drinking. Office parties, vendors and suppliers sending bottles of booze as presents, invitations from family members (those who were still speaking to me), and neighborhood gatherings were to be expected. How could I cope with all that alcohol flowing freely?

My friend, Vic, and the other members of the Wednesday night St. David’s group were the first to come to my rescue. They reminded me that ANY holiday was simply another 24-hour period and that we do this one day at a time. Vic also strongly suggested, as only he could, that I get to as many meetings as possible over this time period. Finally, I was reminded that I needed to concentrate on being grateful for the blessings of the program I had been freely given. It was enough to get me through.

Since then, I have come to realize that we have a multitude of tools available to us to cope with the depression, loneliness, and fear we experience, not only during the holidays, but all through the year. There is, of course, the fellowship of other sober members of the program. Several groups that have permanent meeting sites stay open 24 hours a day all through the holidays. Additionally, there are usually social gatherings of sober AAs having open house parties, groups sponsoring dances, and other opportunities to be surrounded by sober members of AA. Finally, this time of year also gives us a chance to do some twelfth-step work, since lonely and depressed active alcoholics may be at last ready to hear the marvelous message of Alcoholics Anonymous and our program of recovery — one day at a time!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

### 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 resumé needed. Just a willingness to offer Love and Service. Contact the Area Chairperson at [chairperson@marylandaa.org](mailto:chairperson@marylandaa.org).

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people, because I would be seeing a lot of both if I made it my home group.

Well, I chose my home group and although I was “still in a fog,” those home group members helped me feel welcome and made me feel there was some hope in overcoming my alcoholism. Anti-social as I was, these people “wore me down” and got to know me. Eventually, I came out of my shell and began talking and remembering people’s names. I became the coffee-maker for the group, which opened up more opportunities to talk with people both before and after the meeting. Our literature tells us “we no longer have to be alone,” and that home group made sure I wasn’t alone anymore.

Home groups, I heard, were the one meeting that I must attend under any and all circumstances. Home groups were where I let people know me and I got to know them. Home groups were where I was introduced and guided through the principles of the program and found the path to a new way of life. I heard in that home group that all I had to do to stay sober was “change everything.” I certainly didn’t think that was possible then, but find I’m still making progress and still changing as the years go by.

When I entered the program, I was the VP in charge of a department for a major corporation. I was not lacking in ego, control issues, or arrogance. I thought I had all the answers, even as alcohol took me to the bottom. I could justify and rationalize most anything, and service work of any kind was just impossible for me because I had long work hours and many business trips – can’t commit to much service when you’re as important as I was, or rather thought I was!

Now, don’t get me wrong. After the coffee-maker tour of duty was over, I continued to help set up the meetings and clean up. I made some speaking commitments at the VA hospital and went with the home group guys, taking meetings in to shut-ins and people in nursing homes, hospitals, etc. So while I was doing some service, I certainly could have done much more.

By the time I finally retired, my first sponsor had died and I had a sponsor from the home group. Both he and his wife were members of AA and both were heavy into service work. Each time there was an election at the home group, this sponsor would ask if I could now be an Intergroup Representative, GSR, or maybe an alternate? Nope, too busy. After my retirement, all he asked was “Is there any reason you can’t be the Intergroup Rep now? So I assumed that position. After a year or so of that, our GSR moved. There was an Alternate Intergroup Rep but no alternate GSR. I became GSR. Later I became the District Secretary.

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able to share some of that experience with you and to help all of you realize that the power of AA doesn’t come from the Conference, but from each and every member carrying the message to alcoholics who still suffer from this dreaded disease. Of course, the main purpose of the Conference is to find ways to better serve you and help you to carry our message of hope, while keeping our fellowship unified worldwide.

On a smaller scale, Maryland General Service’s primary purpose is to do the same thing for AAs in Maryland. Our committees are set up to serve our members, helping them carry the message, while our Committee Meetings and Assemblies help unify our fellowship in Maryland. Even more important is our roll in developing good leadership on which the future of AA depends.

I am proud to say that I see many willing members in our Area who have a passion for AA and its services. Yet it is up to those serving to make sure that we don’t appear to have a permanent group of trusted servants by welcoming and helping all new service workers. I truly believe that I have not received any special treatment, that what I have received is available to all who are willing to serve. One of the most important lessons I have learned this year is that God does not choose those with the tools, but gives tools to those who are chosen.

As we begin to prepare for the 57th General Service Conference, I look forward to sharing my experience with newly elected Panel 57 Delegates and giving back some of what was so freely given to me. Looking forward to next October, when we in Maryland will hold elections for our Panel 58 Officers, we need to start offering opportunities and helping those who are willing to serve as our future leaders. As your Delegate, I am willing to make myself available and help in any way I can to help make service in AA a positive and rewarding experience for everyone. ▲

I went through relocation to another state and quickly volunteered to fill the vacant slot of GSR for the home group I joined in the new state. Now I’m DCM and enjoying the constant knowledge and information gained through working with others in service. I realize today that had I “stayed in the box,” making excuses as to why I couldn’t go beyond my home group, I would have missed many lessons learned and probably never would have learned very much about the structure and operation of AA as a whole.

I find that there are many enjoyable experiences in service work. Attending my first NERAASA (Northeast Regional Alcoholic Anonymous Service Assembly), which was held in Hartford, Connecticut, that year, was an awesome experience. Spending the weekend with 1500 or so members of AA who were attending this event because they wanted to and because they enjoyed it was a sight to behold. There were many smiling faces, conversations, and much handshaking going on. There was a lot of good information about AA that I needed to know. I have continued to attend the NERAASA weekends each year since, and I see many of the same people I saw in Connecticut years ago.

While I fully recognize and understand that selecting a home group is probably one of the most important choices you will make in AA – right up there with whom to choose as a sponsor – I also realize from personal experience that there is much more to AA than just the home group. I fully realize that had I simply continued to attend home group and other meetings and never moved out of the “meeting environment mode,” I would have deprived myself of many enjoyable experiences, and I would have missed the opportunity to meet many new AA friends who are concerned enough about the future of AA that they give of their time and experience in service to make sure “the hand of AA will always be there when someone reaches out for help”... it’s our responsibility.

I attended a workshop last weekend on the Three Legacies of AA. Tom S, who served as the Panel 24 Area 29 Delegate, addressed those in attendance. He said, “AA can get along with you, but with a little effort on your part, AA could very well be much better with you.”

Get involved in service. Get out of the box. Become one of the thousands of volunteers throughout America, Canada, and around the world who make AA what it is today. AA will be better with your service. ▲

## An Enriched Life

Tom R, Area 29 Alternate Delegate

Friends, as I near the end of the first year of my term as Alternate Delegate, I'd like to take a look back at the positive things we have accomplished in Area 29 and look ahead to the exciting events in the year to come. While it is easy to become entangled in and consumed by topics of controversy, I prefer to step back and look at the larger picture and remember our primary purpose and why I am serving the Area – to carry the AA message.

One of the most exciting things I have watched this year has been the re-lighting of some of our dark districts, particularly in Queen Anne and Frederick counties. Through the proactive efforts of our members going out and visiting groups, district meetings have been held, DCMs elected, and events hosted by the districts. Outreach efforts will continue in our inactive districts in the next year. What can be more heartwarming than to visit and support district meetings and workshops and see folks coming into district and Area service and on fire for Alcoholics Anonymous?

We have also seen lines of communication remain open with our local Intergroups, promoting unity between our service entities. At our recent Area 29/Intergroup Day of Sharing, five of ten Maryland Intergroups were represented. The discussion topics were timely and relevant, and the group expressed the strong desire to hold the Day of Sharing twice a year.

Of course one of our most important functions as an Area is to prepare our Delegate for the General Service Conference. Through the Regional Panel reviews of all of the 2006 Conference Agenda Items and background materials, our fellowship was able to give our Delegate an educated and informed group conscience at this year's Mini-Conference. At our August Area Assembly, our Regional Panels met and elected new panel leaders and secretaries. The panel leaders are already selecting dates and locations for the 2007 Regional Panel meetings. The deadline for submission of items for consideration as Conference Agenda Items is January 31, 2007. We should expect to receive the Conference Agenda Items and background material from the General Service Office by mid-February, 2007. Our panels will be meeting between then and the Mini-Conference to review and discuss the material. Our 2007 Mini-Conference will be held on March 30 – April 1, 2007, at the Salisbury Ramada Inn. All AA

members are encouraged to attend and participate in the Mini-Conference. It is one of my favorite service events.

And speaking of favorite service events, I am truly looking forward to the 2007 Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly, or NERAASA, which our Area will host from February 23 – 25, 2007, at the Marriott Hunt Valley Inn. I have watched the hard work of the NERAASA committee so far and have faith it will be another wonderful weekend of presentations, roundtables, discussion, and fellowship. Registration flyers are out. Please pass them on and encourage people to attend.

What better way to give back to Alcoholics Anonymous, to become part of something much bigger than myself and stay sober in the process than to immerse myself in Area service? As I travel around Area 29 and participate in these events, I find myself continually surrounded by people who are passionate about AA and their sobriety. I also find myself more passionate about AA, and about my own sobriety. Every day I feel it is a little bit more enriched. ▲

## I'll Keep Doin' What I'm Doin'

Sue H, Sobriety Into Action Group

Service has always been a major part of my sobriety. My sponsor took me to the Maryland State Convention my first summer sober – June 1971. She didn't care for crowds but wanted to keep me busy (the love of one alcoholic for another). Well, I was hooked.

In those days you had to be sober for two years to work the answering service. So on my second anniversary, Tom F gave me a service job answering the phones. I still think it's the most important job in the program.

The editor of the *Margenser*, John H, needed a typist, and he lived down the street, so it was a perfect fit.

In 1985 Maryland General Service asked me to rent a plane from Maryland to Montreal for the International Convention. I was working in the travel industry, so I seemed like the right person.

God has always kept me busy. While my sponsor didn't get involved in my brand of service, she would go anywhere at any time for an alcoholic. We all have to follow our own paths. But they always told me to get involved in my own sobriety, and I'm going to keep doin' what I'm doin'. ▲

(Intergroup...) continued from page 2...

- Keep names, addresses and phone numbers off AA websites. Although newsletters containing e-mail addresses and phone numbers might be perfectly appropriate for pamphlet racks at meetings, on the Web they can be gold mines to spammers and targeted advertisers. To safeguard anonymity, intergroups and districts can publish "web editions" without contact info and use aliases to "bounce" e-mail to committee chairs and officers.
- Use PhotoShop to make hard-to-modify graphics for AA websites, select non-affiliating domain names, and avoid banner ads.
- Use the "bcc (blind copy)" function for e-mails. Pete explained how forwarding e-mails effectively compiles address lists useful to spammers, etc. By using the bcc function, with an alias or dummy address in the regular addressee line, addresses can be extracted only through specialized programs. Eva described "spider" programs that mine websites and e-mails in transit, collecting e-mail addresses. Listing e-mail addresses as text instead of hotlinks prevents spiders from recognizing them.
- Be aware of the distinction between attraction and promotion, which can be fuzzy. Attraction means people will be able to find us; promotion means they always can find us immediately (as in advertising). Thus, "attraction" allows maintenance of anonymity with possible delays in availability.
- Stress to newcomers how anonymity works. Like recovery, the legacy of service is best transmitted one-on-one, and every new generation of sober drunks doesn't have to repeat its elders' mistakes.
- Finally, take care lest cyberspace make us more virtual to each other. Face-to-face contact is as important today as it was in 1935!

With singular agreement that we should have more days like this, we ended our time together in the usual manner. Planning is underway for another Day of Sharing, possibly in spring, 2007. ▲



# NERAASA '07

Sixteenth Annual  
Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly

2007 General Service Conference Theme  
"Our 12th Step Responsibility - Are We Going To Any Length?"

Hunt Valley, Maryland  
February 23rd, 24th and 25th, 2007

**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:**

Baltimore Marriott Hunt Valley Inn, Hunt Valley, Maryland  
Hosted by Area 29 - Maryland

**DEADLINES:**

Hotel Reservation February 2, 2007  
Meal Registration February 15, 2007  
NERAASA Registration February 15, 2007 by mail, otherwise on-site

**ON-SITE REGISTRATION:**

Begins at 5:00 pm  
Thursday, February 22, 2007

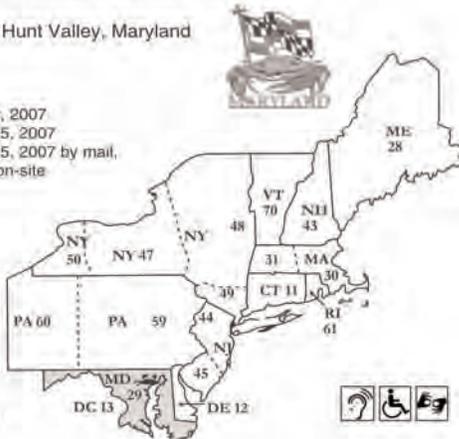
**FIRST PANEL:**

Begins at 3:00 pm  
Friday, February 23, 2007

**ICE BREAKER AA MEETING:**

Thursday Evening  
February 22, 2007

[www.marylandaa.org/neraasa.htm](http://www.marylandaa.org/neraasa.htm)



## 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](mailto:margenser@marylandaa.org). The submission deadline for the next issue is February 3, 2007.

### 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.

## 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

NERAASA 2007 - February 23 - 25, 2007

Baltimore Marriott Hunt Valley Inn

245 Shawan Rd., Hunt Valley, MD 21031 Tel: 410-785-7000



## NERAASA '07

**Hotel Reservation Information:**

Check In: 3:00 pm Check Out: 11:00 am

**Guarantee Policy:** Mandatory credit card or advance deposit on all reservations.

**Wheelchair Accessible:** There are a limited number of wheelchair accessible rooms available.

**Smoking:** Will only be allowed outside as the hotel is a non-smoking hotel.

**Hotel reservations MUST be made directly with Baltimore Marriott Hunt Valley Inn**

▲ Send the form on the facing page along with \$100 deposit

▲ Call 1-800-228-9290 group code:

▼ "NRSNRSA" for single or double

▼ "NRSNRSB" for triple or quad

▲ Go online at [www.marriotthuntvalley.com](http://www.marriotthuntvalley.com)

After February 2, 2007 hotel rooms and rates are based on availability.

**BY AIR OR RAIL:**

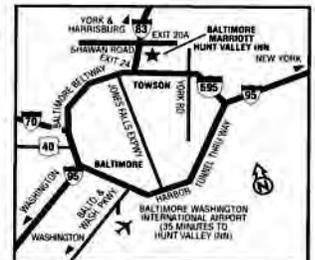
PLEASE REVIEW THE "TRANSPORTATION" LINK AT [WWW.MARYLANDAA.ORG/NERAASA.HTM](http://WWW.MARYLANDAA.ORG/NERAASA.HTM) FOR CRITICAL INFORMATION REGARDING TRANSPORTATION FOR THOSE TRAVELING BY TRAIN OR PLANE

**BY CAR:**

**From the South:**  
I-95 North towards Baltimore. Merge into I-695 E / Baltimore Beltway Inner Loop toward Towson. Merge onto I-83 N via Exit 24 toward Timonium/York, PA. Take Shawan Rd East Exit 20-A toward Cockeysville. Turn slight right onto Shawan Rd. The hotel is immediately on your right.

**From the North:**  
I-95 South towards Baltimore (portions toll) (crossing in to Maryland). Merge onto I-695 W / Baltimore Beltway Outer Loop toward Towson. Merge onto I-83 N via Exit 24 toward Timonium/York, PA. Take the Shawan Rd. East exit. Exit 20A - toward Cockeysville. Turn slight right onto Shawan Rd. The hotel is immediately on your right.

**From the East or West:**  
It is recommended that you do an Internet map search for directions to the hotel from your location.



Panel Presentations / Floor Discussions on Issues Affecting A.A. Today

Northeast Regional Trustee's Report

Saturday Dinner followed by an A.A. Speaker Meeting / Round Table Sharing Sessions:

- |   |                                    |  |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| ▲ District Committee Members                  | ▲ Treatment Facilities             | ▲ Area Delegates and Alternate Delegates |
| ▲ General Service Representatives             | ▲ Correctional Facilities          | ▲ Area / District Registrars             |
| ▲ A.A. Literature                             | ▲ Grapevine/La Viña                | ▲ Area/District/Group Secretaries        |
| ▲ Archives                                    | ▲ Area / District Chairpersons     | ▲ Area/District/Group Treasurers         |
| ▲ Cooperation With The Professional Community | ▲ Central Office/Intergroup        | ▲ Young Peoples                          |
| ▲ Public Information                          | ▲ Special Needs/Remote Communities |  |
| ▲ Hispanic Community (La Comunidad Hispánica) |                                    |  |

For more info visit [www.marylandaa.org/neraasa.htm](http://www.marylandaa.org/neraasa.htm), or call a NERAASA 2007 Committee Member:

Nancy K., Chair - (c)  
Linda J., Registration -

Earl H., Program -  
Nancy B., Registration -

**WHAT TO BRING:**  
Your A.A. Service Manual  
2006 Final Conference Report  
Note Taking Material

# MARGENSER

Parkville, MD 21234

STANDARD RATE  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
CLINTON, MD 20735  
Permit No. 4543

**MARGENSER** Mailing List Update Form

Send to \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

New       Correction       Change

Group       Individual

Mail form to: Margenser  
Parkville, MD 21234