

MARGENSER

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

Delegate's Corner: The Pleasure of Serving

Barbara B, Area 29 Delegate

I first need to express my gratitude and thanks for the honor and privilege of being your trusted servant. I have been serving you as the Panel 56 Delegate for Area 29, Maryland, for the last two years, but that is only part of my 20 years of service to AA. Maryland General Services has held elections for Panel 58 officers and in the spirit of rotation, Tom R, who has been serving as your Panel 56 Alternate Delegate will be replacing me as your next Delegate. Let me also introduce the other Panel members. Nancy B will be the Alternate Delegate; Linda J will be your next Chairperson; Denise S will be your Secretary; and Tammie will continue on as Treasurer after taking over six months as interim Treasurer.

I want to tell you how service work has enhanced my sobriety because it has kept me involved in AA. Bill W believed every member of our fellowship is responsible to make sure AA is available to all those who seek it as a way up and a way out of the disease of Alcoholism. We are all responsible to do just that. A person can come to AA with the hope of getting sober, but we as members must reach
continued on page 6...

The Best Folks, Ever

Patricia R, Area 29 Chairperson

During the last eight years or so, I have been blessed and privileged to work with some of the best folks in the AA service structure. I sit in absolute awe of the selfless dedication and passion with which these AA members serve our fellowship at the group, district, intergroup, and Maryland General Service levels.

Although AA is unlike any other organization, there is one glaring similarity. That is that about ten percent of the membership does the work for the rest of the fellowship. That's about the same as your average PTA, church group, boy/girl scouts, school volunteers and so on. Therefore, the ten percent that show up at MGS on a regular basis are very special people, the select few, the "elite" if you will. They are, as I said, the most selfless and generous-hearted people I have had the privilege to work with.

The cool thing about AA is that anyone can become classified or qualified as general service junkies. All it takes is the willingness to serve and the ability to attend the meetings. Please come and join us and broaden your recovery. The experience will strengthen you and add to your quality of life in sobriety.

continued on page 3...

Table of Contents...

<i>Delegate's Corner: The Pleasure of Serving</i>	...1	<i>Spiritual Awakening</i>	...3
<i>The Best Folks, Ever</i>	...1	<i>Our Primary Purpose</i>	...4
<i>The Bewitching Season</i>	...1	<i>NERAASA 2008</i>	...5
<i>District 20 Players: A Spiritual Opportunity</i>	...2	<i>Life Begins at 70</i>	...6
<i>Communication in Area 29</i>	...3	<i>Growing With My Home Group</i>	...7
		<i>Maryland General Service 2008 Calendar</i>	...7

The Bewitching Season

Bill H, Fall Conference Co-Chair

The last weekend in October means two things to most of us in Alcoholics Anonymous in Area 29: Halloween and the Fall Conference. Halloween usually means a fun but scary time. This year, so did the Fall Conference. We have always found the Fall Conference to be a worthwhile event with a lot of emphasis on the fun part of the fellowship. But where does the scary part come into the picture? Well this year, the Fall Conference committee took it upon themselves to take a chance on a different location. Anyone involved in previous conferences know that this was no little undertaking. However, this committee, led by Jessica D and largely made up of young people in AA, with a few of us more mature members added for spice and age, took the bull by the horns and gave us a successful undertaking of love and service.

The weather was terrible. Ocean City in the fall can be a gamble. But the spirit and enthusiasm of the committee poured over into the conference and the result was a special event. The speakers were excellent from a resounding boom on Thursday night to a soft and heart-

continued on page 2...

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.

District 20 Players: A Spiritual Opportunity

Nancy B, Area 29 Secretary

In the winter of 2005, the District 20 committee held a meeting to discuss the possibility of putting on a workshop. We had planned several workshops in the past, and the attendance was very low, never greater than 35 and usually from 5-20 people.

One GSR asked if we thought we could put on a play. After much discussion, and since no one on the committee had the slightest idea how to put on a play, we decided to put out a flyer promoting a "Casting Call" to see if there was any interest. We had selected the play "Snow White and The Seven Character Defects" from the available scripts. Written by Gail L from the Akron, OH, Intergroup Office, this play sounded like fun.

At a meeting several nights later, I announced the upcoming casting call. We asked if anyone was interested in directing the show, the lights and the set, and who thought they might be actors. The announcement got a good laugh since EVERYONE could identify with this. They also laughed at the title of the play...things were looking up!

A young man I had never seen before approached me at the end of the meeting. He had that "deer in the headlights" look. He introduced himself as "David" and said he had just moved to the Hagerstown area from Annapolis, where he had directed that very same play two years before. He could not believe I was announcing the need for volunteers to perform THAT play. Without hesitation, I asked him if he would be interested in being our director. He said he would show up at the casting call, and we would see what happens. I had a good feeling about this.

The night of the casting call came, and we had about 20 people show up to try out – including David! He slipped naturally into the role of director and started to interview those who showed up. It was awesome to watch. People picked up scripts and just started reading. David moved them into place. Several folks assumed non-acting roles. Jan, our stage manager, brought years of experience with her. As DCM, I took on the role of Producer and keeper of the budget.

Over the course of three months of rehearsals, we lost several actors but were able to replace them right away. It was amazing how the volunteers fit right into the roles they were assigned. We started

every rehearsal with the Serenity Prayer and ended it with The Lord's Prayer. We all had many opportunities to pick up our kit of spiritual tools, as attitudes and personalities would often be tested. The end result was a moving and spiritual experience for all of us.

We performed "Snow White and The Seven Character Defects" at a "Dinner and a Play" in Hagerstown, MD. We were also asked by the MD General Service 2005 State Convention Committee to perform two weeks later. This was another spiritual experience for us. The feedback was incredible; it seems we really had carried a message of hope and recovery to the still-suffering alcoholic. That was our mission.

The following year, David employed his writing skills and created an original recovery play: "Gilligan's Blackout." Some of the previous year's actors and many new ones turned out, including our new DCM, Lief E. In my new district service position of Treasurer, I continued as Producer. Jan continued as Stage Manager and encouraged a few others to help out back-stage.

We were not only privileged to perform for our local district at the second "Dinner and a Play," but we again performed at the MD State Convention. In addition, District 1 asked us to come to Prince Frederick, and the Washington County Health Department invited us to perform for their September "Recovery Month" event. It was a busy year for us, but we were grateful for the opportunity to share our gift. Again, the feedback was very positive that indeed the message of hope and recovery had been carried.

In 2007, David again wrote an original recovery play. This time, he really tested his writing and directing skills with the play "The Adventures of Sober Man!" This play was performed at the third district "Dinner and a Play," the 2007 MD State Convention, and in District 1.

David is currently working on a third original script and fourth play for District 20. We have already been invited to perform at the 2008 MD State Convention, and there is a standing invitation from District 1. Jan is on board as stage manager. Lief, who will be District 20's incoming Treasurer, will take over as Producer, and I hope to be able to stay involved, maybe with costumes. Previous actors are asking when we will start rehearsal again, and alcoholics who have not even joined our fellowship are being chosen by God to join us.

What an opportunity we have been given. We

can't wait to give it away! Each play has given at least twenty recovering alcoholics and friends of AA the opportunity to perform a service to the fellowship and the program which has changed our lives. It has been a learning experience and a chance to practice the AA principles. We will forever be grateful to the God of our understanding who set this opportunity in motion. ▲

(Bewitching Season) continued from page 1...

wrenching tale of love from a humble mayor from Kannapolis on Sunday morning. The workshops were interesting and, as always, we were well represented by our friends from Al-anon. The children were busy making pumpkins and dressing up for Halloween.

Thursday night found some of us trying to sing our way to stardom, while others danced with the stars on Friday night. Saturday's dance and Halloween costume party found our Delegate-elect preparing for his future job by coming as a crash dummy. Four of our younger AA members came on wooden horses with cowboys hats and were uniquely identified as the four horsemen from the Big Book. The banquet was excellent, and the Carousel went out of its way to make our stay pleasant.

The above descriptions sound like most of our past conferences except for one thing, which is hard for me to put into words. The theme for this conference was Unity – Service – Recovery: three major elements needed for continuing sobriety.

The Steps, Traditions, and Concepts were all working together, from the beginning moments of that first committee meeting in Severna Park in November 2006 to the last hugs and farewells that last Sunday in October in Ocean City. There was an atmosphere of hope, fellowship and sobriety that cannot be found in words or in books but only in the heart. Some new friendships were made, some old friendships reinforced, and some lives saved by this gathering of recovering alcoholics, who live one day at a time by those most beautiful and spiritual ideals, Unity – Service – Recovery.

Thank you, Maryland General Service, for your support of this event. And again, a special thanks to the 2007 Fall Conference Committee for allowing their Higher Power to use them to their utmost ability to give us fellow alcoholics a venue in which our sobriety can grow and prosper. ▲

Communication in Area 29

Tom R, Area 29 Alternate Delegate

I have often said one of the gifts of service work in Alcoholics Anonymous has been the people I meet and the friends I make. Service in Area 29 has certainly expanded my world of friends. As I travel around Maryland and the northeastern US, I find that the key to service and cooperation between our groups and those who serve our groups is clear and continuous communication.

Though in this modern age of cellular phones, Internet, and email, the most effective communication, as with our Twelve Step work, is done face to face with our membership. It is interesting that so many members are not aware of the services available to them through our General Service Office, Maryland General Service, our districts and our intergroups. It has been my philosophy that by going "out there" to our groups, districts and intergroups, our trusted servants in Maryland General Service help put a face to General Service and carry information to our fellowship on what's going on in AA as a whole and offer our services. I have simply watched and followed in the path of others who have done the same.

Thank you for allowing me to serve Maryland General Service as your Alternate Delegate over the past two years. I am looking forward to new challenges and responsibilities in the next two years serving as your Panel 58 Delegate. It is my goal to be an effective conduit of information between AA General Service and the home groups in Area 29. The best means I feel of achieving this goal is continuously reaching out to our groups, districts and intergroups. It is an honor to serve you and with you, and I'm excited about our new General Service Representatives and District Committee Members who will be rotating in over the next few months. Please remember that I serve you, and am available and willing to travel to attend and support your group, district, committee and intergroup meetings and activities. Please feel free to contact me at any time. 📍

Spiritual Awakening

Ron M, BYIOL Group, Easton

No burning bush here. Although Bill W relates to his flash of light, the experience for most of us is what William James refers to as the "educational variety." As a common drunk, I prefer to view my spiritual awakening as being of the garden variety. That is, the awakening as experienced by the majority of members of Alcoholics Anonymous. Just what is a spiritual awakening and what results can be expected to occur as a result?

Like most of us, I came to AA not knowing what to expect, and in the beginning questioning and challenging whatever was said in the meetings. When the concept and idea of God (I did not hear the phrase Higher Power) was discussed, I was immediately turned off and ready to run for the door. In Step 2 of the 12 and 12, it refers to the fact that AA comes harder to those who have lost or rejected faith than to those who never had any faith at all. I relate to that statement very well.

As a child, I was given a strong religious education, up to and including high school. This God of my childhood remained strong into my early 20s when I started to drink. As my drinking career progressed, my religious beliefs regressed to the point that a few months before quitting I sat with the church pastor and proudly proclaimed that I had become agnostic.

From that bottom it took a number of years to crawl out of the mental pit of non-belief. I have found that the entry to the state of true sobriety, and not just dryness, is found at the threshold of a spiritual awakening. As time moved along, one day at a time, I did not drink, but I found that I was not experiencing the same degree of freedom and well being that others in the program exhibited.

Although I was a faithful attendee of AA meetings and had a sponsor that I used infrequently, I was still uncomfortable in my own skin. After looking around and taking a number of other peoples' inventories I came to the conclusion that maybe I ought to try finding a HP that could and would help me along the Road of Happy Destiny.

This journey was not an easy one. Trying to shed the God of my childhood and develop a new, loving and understanding HP turned out to be a long and arduous chore. Thanks to numerous loving and perceptive persons, both in and out of the clergy, I was finally able to look to my inner self and find a personal HP that did not resemble the God of my childhood. This took me into the eighth year of continuous AA membership. I was able to look around and take the best of others and leave the rest.

Today, my spiritual life is a mixture of numerous observations of fellow AA's. I am able to look in the mirror, to look the guy in the glass right in the eye and say "I'm OK," because I believe in a HP of my understanding, and that HP gives me the serenity that allows me to live one day at a time, happy joyous, and free. 📍

(The Best Folks Ever) continued from page 1...

Whatever experience your service position may require will be taught to you by others who have held that position, or you will learn on the fly like so many other jobs in AA. You will never be left alone to wing it. I strongly encourage the GSRs to attend the Maryland General Service Assemblies (After all, that's part of the job requirement of a GSR).

There are only five meetings each year. Surely you can attend five meetings! Mark your calendar to attend the meetings of Panel 58 to be held March 15, May 17,

August 16, October 18 and December 13, 2008. Our new Panel 58 Chair is Linda J and she will welcome you to Maryland General Service with a smile and a "thank you."

Don't cut yourself short by limiting your service to your District or Home Group, please come out and join us as we trudge the "Road to a Happy Destiny." It has been a privilege and a pleasure to meet and serve with so many wonderful alcoholics during my term as Panel 56 Chair. Thank you for allowing me to serve you. 📍

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.

Our Primary Purpose

Marty S, Hagerstown Group

Tradition Five tells us that each group's primary purpose is to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Have we, as the years have passed, relinquished this responsibility to the rehabs, at least to some extent?

When I came into the program in the late 60s, almost everyone came in because of Twelfth Step activity. There were very few rehabs, and it was rare that employers had any kind of Employee Assistance Program. When we hit bottom and, in our desperation, called AA, someone came and carried the message of AA and of hope directly to us. The members of the group worked with us on a very personal basis, patiently explaining the steps of recovery, answering our questions, showing us the path of sobriety, explaining the traditions, demonstrating love and service, and inviting us to "Thoroughly follow our path." What is our responsibility today toward the still suffering alcoholic? We must remember that a newcomer, whether fresh out of Rehab or coming in as a result of a Twelfth Step call, is still suffering and mostly unaware of how good life can be staying sober in AA.

Many of them, thankfully, have been given a start on this process of recovery during their stay at the rehab, and now the rest is up to us. Our

job is to take a newcomer under our wing, regardless of how he or she got here, and help that newcomer become a strong, solid, and sober member of AA. Many of these newcomers have other addictions in addition to alcohol. That should not deter us from making certain that every person, even those "dual addicted," become sober members of AA if they have a desire to stop drinking.

If we want newcomers to not only work the steps in their lives but to respect our traditions, including our singleness of purpose, we must show them the way and not turn them away. We need to impress upon them why the traditions are so vital to our ability to help those who will come after us and why service activities are so vital to sustained sobriety.

One method we have for carrying the message is to make certain that our meetings focus on our program of recovery from alcoholism. Too often meetings get way off track and become "Woe is me" litanies about marital problems, legal problems, job problems, car troubles, relationship difficulties, health issues, drug problems, etc.

Most newcomers, as we did when we were new in the program, have those kinds of problems in abundance. Many feel that they should volunteer to speak up at meetings and, of course, the many problems in their lives are what they want to discuss. It is up to us to guide them and let them

know that sobriety through the practice of the twelve steps is the answer to those problems. We need to emphasize the message of hope and recovery from Alcoholism that is contained in our program of recovery. Finally, we need to stress the reliance on a Higher Power that we have found to be the key to a long and satisfying life of sober happiness. If we are successful, those coming into the program today will become the strong AA members of future years. It's our responsibility to do that. ♣

**Annapolis Area
Intergroup presents:**

**New Year's Eve Gala
Buffet and Dance**

December 31, 2007

St. Martin's in the Field

**Contact AAIA for information:
410.268.5441**

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 2683
Salisbury, MD 21802

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, PO Box 2683, Salisbury, MD 21802 or via email to margenser@marylandaa.org. The submission deadline for the next issue is February 23, 2008.



NERAASA '08

17TH ANNUAL

NORTHEAST REGIONAL ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS SERVICE ASSEMBLY

2008 GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE THEME

“COMMUNICATION AND PARTICIPATION – THE KEY TO UNITY AND SELF-SUPPORT”

WEST ATLANTIC CITY, SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY

FEBRUARY 22ND, 23RD AND 24TH, 2008

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (NERAASA) is for GSR's, DCM's, Area Committee Members and Intergroup and 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:

CLARION HOTEL & CONVENTION CENTER

6821 Black Horse Pike, Atlantic City West, EHT, NJ 08234

DEADLINES:

Hotel Registration - January 24, 2008

Event & Meal Registration - February 10, 2008

Registration available on-site

ON SITE REGISTRATION:

Begins at 1:00 pm

Friday, February 22, 2008

FIRST PANEL:

Begins at 3:00 pm

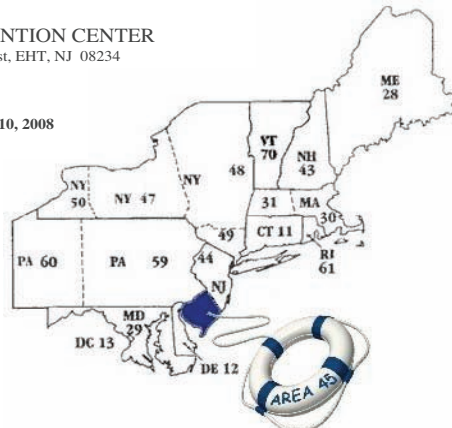
Friday, February 22, 2008

ICE BREAKER AA MEETING:

Thursday Evening at 8:00pm

February 21, 2008

www.neraasa.org



NERAASA 2008 – February 22 – 24, 2008
Clarion Hotel & Convention Center Atlantic City
 6821 Black Horse Pike
 Egg Harbor Township, NJ 08234
 Phone: (609) 272-0200 Toll-Free: (800) 782-9237
 Web contact: clarionacwest@comcast.net



NERAASA '08
 SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY
 AREA45

Hotel Reservation Information:

Check In: 4:00pm **Check Out:** 12:00pm

Wheel chair Accessible: Handicap accessible rooms are available.

Smoking: Smoking is allowed in a limited number of smoking guest rooms (or outside designated areas)

Hotel reservations MUST be made directly with NERAASA '08 for rates quoted.

- ❖ Send the form on the facing page along full payment or credit card information – or –
- ❖ Go online at www.neraasa.org (click on NERAASA 2008, then Registration - starting 10-20-07)
- ❖ Confirmation of your reservations is through the NERAASA '08 Committee (not the hotel)
- ❖ **Credit cards can ONLY be used for pre-registration**
- ❖ Walk-in Registration: cash/check/money order

BY AIR OR RAIL:

Please review the “Directions” link at <http://www.neraasa.org/neraasa/direction.htm> for information regarding transportation & directions:

- ❖ Hotel(s) provides shuttle service from Atlantic City Airport
- ❖ For those in need, the NERAASA Committee may be able to assist with some transportation

BY CAR:

From Philadelphia & West

Walt Whitman Bridge to Route 42 South to Atlantic City Expressway toward Atlantic City, to exit 75 Garden State Parkway South, to exit 37 toward US-40/Pleasantville/US-322/Atlantic City. Turn left at W Washington Ave. Turn right at Fire Rd. Turn left at Black Horse Pike/US-322 E/US-40 East. Hotel is on right.

From the Northeast

Garden State Parkway South to Exit 37 toward US-40/Pleasantville/US-322/Atlantic City. Turn left at W Washington Ave. Turn right at Fire Rd. Turn left at Black Horse Pike/US-322 E/US-40 East. Hotel is on right.

From the Northwest

It is recommended that you do an Internet map search for directions to the hotel from your location or to Philadelphia and follow directions *From Philadelphia*

From the South (including Philadelphia Airport)

Interstate I-95 North to Philadelphia. Walt Whitman Bridge to Route 42 South to Atlantic City Expressway toward Atlantic City, to exit 75 Garden State Parkway South, to exit 37 toward US-40/Pleasantville/US-322/Atlantic City. Turn left at W Washington Ave. Turn right at Fire Rd. Turn left at Black Horse Pike/US-322 E/US-40 East. Hotel is on right.



Panel Presentations / Floor Discussions on Issues Affecting A.A. Today
 Northeast Regional Trustee's Report

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

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

For more information visit www.neraasa.org, or call a NERAASA 2008 Committee Member:

WHAT TO BRING:
 You A.A Service Manual
 2007 Final Conference Report
 Note Taking Material

Life Begins At 70

Gil R, New Beginnings of Hope Group

Hi, my name is Gil. I'm an alcoholic. I have spent most of my life in a bottle. I look back on my life and see how I lived it in segments as it pertains to my increasing use of alcohol. I was a depression baby. Jobs and money were hard to come by, but beer and booze were easy to get. I started with the "help" of older friends and relatives. Some neighborhood taverns even allowed us to buy beer at the "back door."

My drinking started as a little kid of about ten and I really liked the taste. Drinking was infrequent then but picked up in High School. It was there I discovered whiskey. And I liked the taste of that even more. Drinking was when I could get it, kind of a weekend thing.

After high school came the Navy. I did sea duty in the China Seas and the South Pacific during WWII. Drinking at sea was rare but I made up for it on liberty. I was in the Philippines at the time. I was only 17, but that Navy uniform permitted me to drink anytime, anyplace, and I did.

After the War came College. During this four year period I became a daily drinker AND a morning drinker. This pattern was to follow me at an increasing rate throughout my working life.

During my 40 years with the Company I worked for, my responsibilities included preparation for conventions, trade shows, industrial expositions, and all National and Regional sales meetings. All of these activities included hospitality rooms and entertainment on a very large scale. My consumption of alcohol increased accordingly. There was no doubt in my mind... I was a DRUNK. Hangovers, blackouts, accidents, hospitals, cops, fights and arguments with family, friends, et al became a way of life for me and, of course, so did drinking.

Retirement at 65 only increased my drinking. I was really messed up. At 70 years of age, a serious fall sent me to the hospital. It was a suspected heart attack. I was, however, only "dead" drunk. This scare sent me to Alcoholics Anonymous. Thus began my recovery.

I am now able to say, "I'm an alcoholic." Before that I was a Drunk! AA has given me a second life. That old drunk is dead and buried. In these 10 years of sobriety, I have regained my dignity and my life. The first of the Promises: "We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness" says it all for me. I am first and foremost free of alcohol and I am also free of fear. I am free of anger and I am free to have God back into my life, big time!

God has always been in my life but not as He is today. This God of my understanding is a loving, caring, understanding and forgiving God who not only watches over me but guides and directs me in all I do in the "new life" He has given me. I LIVE Alcoholics Anonymous every day, all day. Is this happiness? You bet! God and AA have allowed me to accomplish many things in sobriety.

At 80 years of age I have places to go, things to do, and people to see every day of my life. Most of this is AA related. I've been sky diving, hot air ballooning, parasailing and even took the January Polar Bear Plunge in the Chesapeake Bay. Three days a week I'm in the gym working with a personal trainer. This is keeping me mobile after suffering a massive stroke three years ago. I'm also very active in the "computer world." All of this would be just "bar talk" were it not for AA and the people in this Program helping me maintain sobriety. I truly believe that I have found the peace of mind that this Program offers to all of us. ♣

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

out our hands to welcome them. We could give them a copy of the Big Book and send them on their way, but if we did that, what would the future of AA look like?

No, we don't do that because we know we must give to them what was freely given to each of us, which is an invitation to join a home group and get a sponsor to help them understand how this program works. We need to give them a job in the home group to help make them feel a part of AA and rotate the jobs so they can understand the AA spirit of rotation.

We invite them to join our committees and show them how to make a commitment. We work the steps with them to show them the road to recovery and the possibility of change. We teach them our Traditions and show them how relationships are made and kept. When the basket is passed, we show them that AA has a future, and we believe that we must support the future with our contributions. As a member of AA, I have learned humility through anonymity, and my life has grown from the inspiration of service work. I may be rotating out as your Delegate, but I will never rotate away from service. ♣

Growing With My Home Group

Ray T, Early Birds Group

I got involved very early in Home Group service, becoming coffee maker with about four weeks sobriety. I held that position for almost two years, reluctantly giving it up but realizing that I was keeping someone else from giving back in the same manner I chose when newly sober. But I needed to stay active; I felt that my continued sobriety depended on being deeply involved in service. So I took over as Literature Rep. I also became curious about jobs I had heard about outside of my Home Group and volunteered to be alternate GSR. In very short order, the GSR stopped going to district meetings, so I became the de facto GSR for my group.

This really opened my eyes to a bigger view of AA than I had known to exist. I went to Area assemblies and Area committee meetings, the latter just to find out what was going on. I also began to meet a lot of other AA members and learned that some districts didn't do much at all while others were even more active than my own District. And I learned that, while my Home Group was quite large, it really wasn't very active outside of its own meeting room.

I talked to different Home Group members and found that their primary interest was in our meeting (and other meetings in the District) but that there wasn't much interest outside of just attending and social activities. This bothered me initially, but I came to realize that my interests weren't necessarily shared by others. So I decided to kick my humility up a notch, talk to my Higher Power about it, and just be patient. If something were meant to happen it would in due time.

I continued attending all the Area assemblies that I could and started to pick up little ideas that I could bring to my Home Group. During this time, I was elected Group Treasurer and established a prudent reserve and also a reserve for literature. While serving as Literature Representative, there were times when the Group was low on (or out of) some of the books, especially Big Books, and we didn't have available funds to buy new ones. As Treasurer, I didn't want that to happen to me or to the new Literature Rep. so I established the reserve and announced it during a Treasurer's report and no one noticed. However they did notice that we now had a prudent reserve and were glad of it.

continued on page 7...

(Home Group) continued from page 6...

At an Area Assembly, one DCM commented about getting a post office box for a group address. I thought this was a good idea, and my Group was large enough that we could afford to do the same. So I suggested it during a business meeting, explaining that it gave the Group an identity apart from any individual and mail items didn't depend on who was in an office. This was accepted.

I had to open a new checking account as Treasurer, and I found that I had to use my own personal information in opening the account. I knew that I wasn't going to keep the job forever, so I looked into how to depersonalize that position. I settled on getting the Group an Employer Identification Number (EIN). This turned out to be easy. I went to the IRS web site, filled out a SS4 online, and received my EIN immediately. I later received the official form in the mail. I then went to my bank and changed the account from a personal checking to a business checking account. With group

mailings going to our post office box, it didn't matter who was Treasurer; statements always went to the same address. This simplified the transferring of the job when it was time for me to rotate from the position.

Since we could afford it, I also suggested that the Group purchase a subscription to the *Grapevine*; this was accepted. I later donated my subscription to the Group as well. Then, after reading the Service Manual, I suggested that we have a Grapevine Rep. No one really knew what the job entailed but someone volunteered. Now, they are the first person to receive all *Grapevines*, so they can report on the articles and generate new interest in the magazine.

The Service Manual suggested a number of other positions, such as Intergroup Rep. and Secretary, which I thought we ought to have. But, as with other actions, I went slowly, talking to group members one-on-one, to hear their opinions and gauge their reactions. After several months, we added an Intergroup Rep and three months after that, a group Secretary.

I am proud of my Home Group. I know the changes that occurred happened because my Higher Power was guiding me. They also happened because my Group is pretty dynamic; we have a lot of newcomers attending on a regular basis, and many stay with my Home Group after they've left their recovery centers. So our talent pool of willing trusted servants continues to grow. I hope that I'll continue to grow as I move into General Service. ♣

ATTENTION DCMS

Take the 2008 Maryland General Service calendar back to your District meeting to discuss hosting an Area event in the coming year. Please contact Linda J at chairperson@marylandaa.org for further details.

MARYLAND GENERAL SERVICE 2008 CALENDAR

Panel 58 Planning	January 19	District 31, Arnold, MD.
Area Committee	February 16	Dist. 21, Hebron or Salisbury
NERAASA	Feb. 22,23,24	W. Atlantic City, NJ
NERD	March 7-9	Vermont
Area Assembly(Annual Mtg.)	March 15	To be determined
Mini Conference	April 11-13	To be determined
General Service Conference	April 27-May 3	New York, NY
Area Assembly (Report Back)	May 17	To be determined
MD State Convention	June 12-15	Clarion Conference Center, Hagerstown, MD
Area Committee	July 19	To be determined
Area Assembly	August 16	To be determined
Area Committee	September 20	To be determined
Area Assembly (Inventory)	October 18	To be determined
Fall Conference	Oct 30- Nov 2	Ocean City
Area Committee (Budget)	November 15	To be determined
Area Assembly (Budget)	December 13	To be determined

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