

MARGENSER

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

Service Gladly Rendered in Area 29

Tom R, Area 29 Delegate

Friends: The long form of Tradition Twelve reads, “And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.” The last sentence in this passage reminds me never to forget where I came from, how I got here, and my gratitude for the gift of Alcoholics Anonymous. Along with those feelings is a strong desire to stay sober and a real fear of complacency.

I owe an amends to our 2008 Fall Conference committee for borrowing the phrase, “Service Gladly Rendered” which was selected as the theme of this year’s Area 29 Fall Conference in Ocean City. In this past year, “service gladly rendered” is what has been so lovingly and tirelessly shown by our trusted servants, area committees, general service representatives, district committee members, and State Convention and Fall Conference committees. What better feeling than to walk into a room full of people on fire for Alcoholics Anonymous. We’ve witnessed districts with

- active Grapevine and Public Information committees,
- Bridging the Gap and Special Needs committees springing to life in both the area and the districts,
- our Area Finance and Workshop committees who have taken their show on the road to districts all around Maryland,

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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.

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Treasurer Explains Where Contributions Go- Tammie F., Area 29 Treasurer

Hi there! I’m Tammie F., your Area 29 Treasurer. Our MARGENSER chair has requested that all officers submit articles for the next edition. I thought members of Area 29 might like to hear about what happens to their contributions sent to the area.

When you visit a meeting and drop your dollar or two in the basket, some of it (we hope) eventually ends up in the Post Office box in Salisbury, for Area 29’s use in carrying the message. You would be amazed at what else ends up in the box, but that is another article!

There are over 1100 registered groups in Area 29. So far this year, 283 groups have sent in a contribution. The donations range from \$1.00 all the way up to \$500. The donations are in the form of money orders, personal checks, business checks, and bank-by-mail checks. It is my job to record the contribution for the group. Well, no one told me I had to be a crackerjack detective in order to do this job!

Some of the contributions come in with just a group name, nothing else. There may not even be a return address on the envelope. So, I am totally lost. Sure, if it is a check, I have a name. But the name on the check may be a spouse or a business. The address on the check doesn’t always mean the group is in the same town either. Just because every one knows John D. is a member of *As Bill Sees It*, doesn’t mean I know him or his home group. I have six different *As Bill Sees It* groups on my list. (This includes my wonderful home group in Berlin.) So I ask around, see if anyone knows this person. If not, I put the contribution at the bottom of the list. I omit the person’s last name, for anonymity reasons. If it is a money order, I may get even less information. Thanks to the DCM’s that get back with me after they review this section.

As more and more people are using on-line banking, I am receiving checks prepared by the bank. So, these have nothing in the envelope, but the check. If the person has not put any

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The Loudest Voice Is Not Always the Best Example*Dana R, Open Forum Group*

Having reached double-digit years in sobriety, I find that I'm faced with a dilemma concerning AA leadership, "bleeding deacons" and "elder statesmen" and the way in which some members choose to "carry the message."

I understand that like financial issues in AA, these subjects may be considered controversial. But if we regularly attend AA meetings, we're almost certain to stumble across some of the examples I'm going to raise.

"Does AA have a real leadership?" Most emphatically the answer is "Yes, notwithstanding the apparent lack of it." (Tradition Two in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pp134-135)

It is frequently stated that our leaders "lead by example." Does the example we witness present a true reflection of AA practices to the newcomer? Or do some newcomers get misguided direction and pass it on as the norm?

"The elder statesman is the one who sees the wisdom of the group's decision, who holds no resentment over his reduced status, whose judgment, fortified by considerable experience, is sound and who is willing to sit quietly on the side-lines patiently awaiting developments. The bleeding deacon is one who is just as surely convinced that the group cannot get along without him, who constantly connives for reelection to office, and who continues to be consumed with self-pity."

Our hope is that the bleeding deacons realize what they are doing, cease and desist in their ego inflating actions and evolve into an elder statesman so as to "become the real and permanent leadership in AA. Theirs is the quiet opinion, the sure knowledge and humble example that resolve a crisis. When sorely perplexed, the group inevitably turns to them for advice." (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions; Tradition Two, pp135)

Quiet opinion...humble example...the group turns to them. On a number of occasions bleeding deacons have been witnessed criticizing how the meeting is being conducted; is against distribution of funds to service entities; and is critical of leadership at various levels of service. Many times they "take over" activities in the group...directing who should hold office; what is and is not the way things are to be run (whether in line with AA practice or not). In other words what we have is leadership by domination not democracy. They force their will upon all others until such time the group has had enough and "rebels" through a group conscience voice or by the bleeding deacon becoming disgruntled to the point that he leaves and finds another group to control.

Many alcoholics have an issue with authority and being told what to do. In early sobriety, encountering or witnessing a domineering bleeding deacon or one suffering from "bigshotism" could easily send the newcomer out the door never to be seen again. In other cases a suffering alcoholic may become dependent on the sponsor and fail to obtain the independence that is found by a reliance on a Higher Power.

In researching the phrase bleeding deacon, one definition stated that the person becomes obsessed with passing their aggressive type of sobriety to others and begins sponsoring large numbers of newcomers. The number of sponsees becomes a personal status symbol rather than Twelve Step service.

My sponsor told me when I came into the program that I had to "grow up." I had to get rid of my self-seeking, ego-inflating, boisterous, loud actions. While I believe I have made progress in this area, I have ample opportunity to practice "patience and tolerance" when these bleeding deacons loudly proclaim their presence, their opinions, their criticism and their negativity in AA meetings. The icing on the cake is their 10-15 minute diatribe each time they share--usually wandering from the topic being discussed or imparting some story they alone think is funny.

Leaders lead by example. They don't have to be loud, attention grabbing, domineering, or teach a recovery program of their own design. As the AA literature tells us, they can become the most effective leaders by being humbly quiet and patient and wait for someone to ask their opinion rather than thinking they need to state their opinion and control the situation. ▲

*(Service Gladly Rendered in Area 29)
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- district retreats and service workshops with phenomenal attendance,
- and our Regional Panels!

Area 29 has submitted a request for a Conference Agenda Item for the 59th General Service Conference, and the request was a direct result of discussion by our AA members in one of this year's Regional Panels. We are formulating one, possibly two more Conference Agenda Items by the end of 2008. These items for changes to our literature came out of our discussions at Regional Panels and at our Area Assemblies. Our requests for Conference Agenda Items are intended to enhance our service and recovery literature and help facilitate future Twelve Step work.

As time approached to travel to the General Service Conference this past April, I had the feeling that I was no longer working toward an event but was now part of a process. As we moved through our Regional Panels and talked about items to be discussed at the General Service Conference, we all became better informed at our Mini-Conference in Columbia. The next step in the process was to carry this information to the General Service Conference. There were no surprises for me at the Conference. The process continued as I reported back to the Area Assembly, our districts and intergroups. Regional Panels have continued to meet throughout the year at Assemblies and on their own, reviewed what happened at the Conference and they are now introducing agenda items for next year. What a wonderful example of our fellowship working together through a group conscience as the guiding force in the future of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Thank you all for allowing me the opportunity to participate in this process. I am excited about working with you for another year as your delegate. Through service opportunities and taking all that is offered in Alcoholics Anonymous, complacency has had no room in my life. ▲

Mrs. Marty Mann

(10/15/1904–7/22/1980)

PART 1

Ron M. (BYOL Easton)

Any history of the evolution of Alcoholics Anonymous would be incomplete without acknowledging the tremendous efforts and long lasting work done by the early women in our fellowship. One such lady was Marty Mann. She was the first of four children and was described by many as a headstrong teenager. She constantly was at odds with her father and that relationship continued into her later years. Her father was a Republican, so naturally Marty became a Democrat and later proclaimed herself an Independent. They clashed because they were so much alike, but deep down they loved each other. Around 1918 Marty was diagnosed with a serious case of tuberculosis. In spite of the fact that Marty's family had money and social position in Chicago this disease was still associated with poverty, dirt and inadequate sanitation and this concept prevailed for many years. In those days vast ignorance existed about TB at every level of society.

In 1921 Marty was newly recovered from TB and was ready to get on with life. Marty set out to be "gay with the gayest" Her inner urges were starting to manifest themselves. Cosmetics previously associated with loose women became big sellers for the first time among ordinary women. Women took up smoking and drinking in public. Marty became a chain smoker, addicted to cigarettes the rest of her life and in the end would contribute to her death. There are some that believed her fatal stroke was related to smoking.

During this period Marty became noted for her drinking capacity. One story relates that she and a female friend entered into a drinking contest to determine who could drink the most. Three judges were assigned and the contest drink was identified as a French 75. This referred to a highball consisting of home-made bathtub gin and expensive champagne. The name of the drink referred to a French 75mm cannon of World War I. The party grew rowdier and rowdier until 2 AM when it began to dwindle and by 5 AM only the three judges and the two contestants were left standing. The contest was declared a draw and the five of them went to breakfast after which Marty and her opponent settled down for some serious drinking.

The years just before the stock market crash of 1929 proved to be quite exciting and life changing for Marty. She eloped and married John Blakemore. John was from the New Orleans area and Marty then became, according to her a "damn Yankee". It turned out that John was a much heavier drinker than Marty and since she had not as yet crossed into her own uncontrolled drinking she was unable to cope or accept his drinking. Their marriage lasted only a few months before Marty obtained a divorce where upon her TB flared up and she once again needed to seek rest and recuperation. She went to New Mexico to rest and soon the divorce was final and she never remarried. It was shortly thereafter that she started to call herself Mrs. Marty Mann.

Along came the depression years, Marty moved to New York, and had a short affair with a long time acquaintance. As this affair ended Marty was discovering her lesbian orientation. There is a lively story in the lesbian community that Marty, dressed in tuxedo and sporting a monocle, arrived by limousine at the stage door of musicals to pick up chorus girls.

The Mann family suffered bankruptcy as did many others during this dark time in U.S. history. Marty's father was drinking heavily and in spite of his many efforts to recover financially, including gold mining in Montana, he and the family never did. Without warning, around 1932, the bottom dropped out of her world, and her drinking crossed the line into complete lack of control. The woman with the hollow leg suddenly couldn't hold her liquor. Before long it took a pint of gin to ease the hangover pains. Around 1933 her father, on medical advice, stopped drinking. When Marty came into AA in 1939 she found that her father had been sober for six years.

The years 1935-36 proved to be a rapid downward spiral that had her drinking one to two quarts of scotch a day. It was during this period that she attempted suicide twice. The first was an overdose of sleeping pills that had proved to be a successful method with a friend and the second was in England, at a party celebrating the Fourth of July, where she went upstairs to sleep off a drunk and in a blackout either fell or jumped from the second floor to a stone terrace below. She fractured both hinges of her jaw, lost her lower teeth, broke a hip and leg, and bit off both sides of her tongue.

(To be continued) ▲

*(Treasurer Explains Where Contributions Go-)
continued from page 1...*

group information in the memo field when he set up the on-line payment, I have no clue about the identity of the group at all. These, I must unfortunately return to the address on the check. I do so hate to return money. At each Area Assembly and Committee meeting, I get to pay our bills. Some of your contributions go for administrative supplies, copies, and postage. Some of your contributions go towards travel expenses. I like to kid our Delegate, Tom, about him never sitting still. You just never know where Tom will appear within our Area. He is willing to travel the entire Area to attend your business meetings, Intergroup meetings, picnics, work shops, and District meetings. Your contribution helps with his gas bill, so he can be in attendance at your functions.

Some of your contributions go for normal expenses and for really great projects. Some of your contributions this year paid the rent for storage of our Area 29 Archives. The Archives have to be stored somewhere between Area events. The Area CPC (Cooperation with the Professional Community) committee has set up informational booths at a health fair and a legal professional conference this year. Your contributions helped get the displays to these functions and helped pay for the parking of the AA volunteers staffing the booths. Our Workshop Committee has become a traveling committee. They are taking their workshops to your Districts. They bring various handouts with them to the workshops. Just recently, your Public Information Committee began work on producing a Young People's video to submit to New York. This project required money for location rent, videotape, and someone experienced in filming and editing video.

There are lots of other projects that get funded because of your contributions. Ask your home group's GSR for more details. If you're interested in service work, the committees are always looking for willing volunteers and new ideas too!

Please remember, it is not the size of the contribution that matters; it is your group giving what it can in order to support your Area services in carrying the message. Together, we can do amazing things. ▲

What Is The Difference Between An Area Assembly And An Area Committee Meeting?

Pat H, GSR, But for the Grace of God Group

Ed. Note: Area 29 Inventory Presentation - October 18, 2008

The number of members who attend an Area Assembly usually fall between 80 and 120 and consists of the General Service Representatives (GSRs) and/or Alternate GSRs from the groups in Area 29, (not all groups are represented) the District Committee Members (DCMs) and/or Alternate DCMs, all committee chairs and co-chairs (there are eight standing committees and ten ad hoc committees) and our five Officers. The Area 29 Assembly meets five times during each calendar year, held approximately bimonthly. All AA members are welcome to attend.

Conversely, the number of members who attend an Area Committee usually fall between 35 and 60 and consists of the DCMs and/or Alternate DCMs from our 47 districts (not all districts are represented), all committee chairs and co-chairs and our five Officers. The Committee meets four times a year. Again, all AA members are welcome to attend.

Area Assembly

The purpose of an area assembly is the same as the purpose of an AA group: to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic. Primarily, the way this is done is by electing a Delegate to serve as the representative of the area to the General Service Conference. The area assembly also provides an opportunity for the District Committee Members and the individual AA groups to share their experience.

The area strives, in part, to:

- a. Sponsor area events such as the annual conventions, various workshops and other service related events that have area-wide significance.
- b. Stimulate AA group involvement and participation in the Assembly.
- c. Allow for free, open and unrestricted

dialogue between AA groups in Area 29 to insure against "railroading" and "log rolling" of one individual's or group's specific agenda or course of action.

- d. Insure the right of the minority to be heard.
- e. Remind the groups of their need to make contributions to the General Service Office.
- f. Provide a forum for allowing the AA groups to inform the Delegate of what items are of concern to the AA group.
- g. Insure that the voice of the AA groups is heard within the AA service structure.
- h. Pool the financial and human resources to stimulate "carrying the AA message" where it is beyond one group's resources to do so.
- i. Act as a guardian of the Twelve Traditions of AA.
- j. Introduce the Twelve Concepts of World Service.

Area Committee

On the other hand, the purpose of the area committee is to provide the leadership necessary to assist the area assembly in carrying out the business of the area assembly. The committee, which is composed of all District Committee Members and all standing and ad hoc committee chairpersons, has firsthand knowledge of what is happening in AA World Services through our Delegate, and is also close to district and local needs and concerns. Typical issues and themes that have been, and most likely will continue to be addressed are as follows:

- a. Is area experience being shared?
- b. Is the AA message getting into hospitals, prisons and rehabilitation centers?
- c. Are news media informed about AA in the districts and the area?
- d. Are professionals aware of AA as a resource?
- e. Are new groups and loners being visited and helped?

The AA Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service, page S40: Perhaps more than any

other group of people in AA, the area committee is responsible for the health of the Conference (area) structure and thus for growth and harmony in the AA Fellowship. If GSRs are lax there is lack of harmony in a district. If there are difficulties in Public Information or some other service area, the Committee Member knows it and can turn to the full committee for help. An active committee deals with all kinds of service problems.

Voting

When the Committee meets, makes a decision and votes on a particular topic/subject, the outcome is not binding on the Assembly. It is the GSR's armed with the conscience of their various groups, the Committee, Officers and all who attend the Assembly that have a vote which makes a final decision on that particular topic/subject.

As stated in Warranty Three contained in Concept 12: "None of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others."

We have learned that this principle is of incalculable value to the harmonious conduct of our Conference affairs. Its application in our structure has already been extensively discussed under the Concept entitled "The Right of Participation," which emphasizes that our world servants, both as individual and as groups, shall be entitled to voting rights in reasonable proportion to their several responsibilities.

The AA Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service, page S52: If the committee reports decisively on its solution to a problem, the Conference (area) is not obligated to accept the report. It can refuse a committee decision, and if it does, the matter is discussed and decided upon in general session (at the area level). While in the majority of cases the Conference (area) does accept a committee recommendation, in typical AA fashion a Conference (area) committee does not represent "authority." After the vote, the Conference (area) chairperson calls for

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minority opinions - and occasionally, a well-reasoned minority opinion can result in another vote, reversing the first decision. Ideally, of course, that is the rare exception; any matter should be so thoroughly considered before a vote is taken that the Conference's (area's) original conclusion will stand.

Area/Committee Meetings, Differences

The AA Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service, page 42, end of Concept IX: "We shall be in continual need of these same attributes – tolerance, responsibility, flexibility, and vision - among our leaders of AA services at all levels. The principles of leadership will be the same whatever the size of the operation.

Maybe this seems like an attempt to stake out a specially privileged and superior type of AA member. But it really is not so. We simply are recognizing that our talents vary greatly. The conductor of an orchestra is not necessarily good at finance or foresight. And it is quite unlikely that a fine banker could be a great musical performer. So when we talk about AA leadership, we only declare that we ought to select that leadership on the basis of obtaining the best talent we can find.

While this article was first thought of in connections with our world service leadership, it is possible that some of its suggestions can be useful to anyone who takes an active part in our Society.

This is true particularly in the area of Twelfth Step work, in which nearly all of us are actively engaged. Every sponsor is a leader. The stakes are about as big as they could be. A human life and usually the happiness of a whole family hang in the balance. What the sponsor does and says, how well he estimates the reactions of his prospects, how well he times and makes his presentation, how well he handles criticisms, and how well he leads his prospect on by personal spiritual example – these qualities of leadership can make all the difference, often the difference between life and death. We thank God that Alcoholics Anonymous is blessed with so much leadership in all of its affairs. 📌

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, C/O Maryland General Service, Inc., P.O. Box 2683, Salisbury, MD 21802 or via email to margenser@marylandaa.org.

The submission deadline for the next issue is
February 21, 2009.

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.

What's your question?

Question: I've heard people say the 24 Hours a Day book is not AA approved literature.

Why isn't it?

Answer: See the following article entitled *24 Hours a Day-The Book*.

Send in your question regarding AA to

MARGENSER@marylandaa.org

and we'll use all resources available to get you an answer.

Twenty-Four Hours a Day-the Book

Editor's Note: In researching the answer to the member's question I came across this article on an AA member's private website. There is no source location acknowledged, so I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the information. It does follow other information I've heard over the years regarding how it was presented to the GSO, was turned down and later printed by Hazelton. Larry H., MARGENSER Chair

The second most popular AA author in total book sales, second only to Bill W. himself, was Richmond Walker. He was a man from the Boston area who managed to get sober in 1939 in the old Oxford Group. There was no AA group in Boston yet at that time. He stayed sober in the Oxford Group for two and a half years, before going back to drinking in 1941. After a year and a half of drinking, he joined the newly founded Boston AA group in

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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

What Is It Like Getting Elected To The Area Panel And What Responsibilities Come With It?

Editors Note: Presentation by Jack C. at the Area 29 MGS Assembly October 18, 2008

The AA Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service is an indispensable tool for AA service work. Pages S20 and S21 in this manual outlines the Third Legacy Procedure for holding elections. This is used at the Area 29 elections, many District elections, and at the Northeastern MD Intergroup elections. Many times at the Intergroup and district elections there are not enough interested, qualified, members of AA to use the procedure as outlined in the Service Manual.

The following is a partial personal service history of one individual in Area 29. Panel

Panel	Delegate	Years	Service Commitment
32	Frank Y.	1982/83	Joined the Three Legacies Group and it is still my home group
34	Thomas E.	1984/85	Intergroup Rep
36	Gene R.	1986/87	Intergroup Rep & General Service Rep
38	Dick R.	1988/89	Intergroup Officer and Group Service Rep
40	Thomas C.	1990/91	Intergroup Officer and Group Service Rep
42	John C.	1992/93	Intergroup Officer and Group Service Rep; District Committee Member and Area Host Chair
44	Valerie W.	1994/95	1 st Elected Area Alternate Delegate
46	Arnold R.	1996/97	Area Chair
48	Peggy T.R.	1998/99	Area Secretary
50	Morgan J.	2000/01	Area Treasurer
52	Victor L.	2002/03	Area Finance Chair
54	Nancy K.	2004/05	
56	Barbara B.	2006/07	
58	Tom R.	2008/09	

What is it like getting elected? Let me explain how I was elected.

Northeastern Intergroup Treasurer to finish out an unexpired term.	"From the hat"
Northeastern Intergroup Treasurer elected to full term.	"From the hat"
Northeastern Intergroup Chair elected to full term.	"From the hat"
1 st elected Area 29 Alternate Delegate, Panel 44 elected to full term.	"From the hat"
Area Chair Panel 46 elected to full term.	"From the hat"
Area Delegate Panel 48 Not elected.	"From the hat"
Area Secretary Panel 48 elected to full term.	4 th Ballot
Area Treasurer Panel 50 elected to full term.	3 rd Ballot

Some of my service heroes have left a lasting impression on me. Jack H. left his name up every election until ill health prevented him from doing so. Paul W. emphatically said to me, "Don't withdraw your name during the balloting process, i.e., when it lookot want to hear. It took about eight years of this before I finally asked him to be my sponsor. Tom S., Lamar R., Ed E., Tom E., and many more old timers had a profound influence on my journey in sobriety. I only hope that I have lived up to their expectations.

My emotions run high when the election goes "to the hat." I try to stay calm, cool and collected but I can only look good on the outside, inside I am a bundle of nerves. I believe that my Higher Power is saying, "Jack, it's time to do some growing up."

What responsibilities come with getting elected? We, as a panel of officers, are responsible for the well being of the area. We are a team. We must learn how to play together in the same sand box. Each officer has specific duties inherent with their relative position on the team. We are the guardians of the Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service for Area 29 and AA as a whole. We are the protectors of the 36 principles of 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts for our area and AA as a whole.

Our primary duty is to elect a Delegate to represent us at the General Service Conference. Our secondary duties are to carry the message, and provide the means for the message to be carried. Part of this is cooperating with the Intergroups but not interfering with them.

The greatest challenge in keeping the area informed is that there are so many districts and groups that do not participate in the process. We work with what we have. Can you imagine the logistical problems we would have if suddenly we had a full complement of Officers, Committee Chairs, DCM's and GSR's and Alternates show up at an Assembly? That would be 5 Officers, 27 Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs, 94 DCM's and Alternates, over 1000 GSR's and another 1000+ Alternates and a sprinkling of past Delegates and maybe some guests. ☹

**Share Your Sobriety...
Contribute an Article**

Larry H, Margenser Chair

Many of us have had, or observed, some pretty interesting people, events or experiences in our sobriety. Many of these had a significant effect on our sobriety and could have the same effect on someone else if you would share it with us.

Contributing an article about your experience, strength and hope, or put another way—Recovery, Unity and Service is "carrying the message to another alcoholic."

It's really a fairly simple process:

- pick a subject
- put it in writing (about one and a half pages is the appropriate 750 word length)
- submit the article to:

Margenser@marylandaa.org with your first name, last initial and home group.

No need to worry about proper grammar, punctuation or the like—Margenser committee members will review and help "fine tune" the article, as needed, prior to printing. Share your memorable sobriety experiences with the Margenser readers throughout Maryland. Become a published writer and "carry the message." ☹

(Twenty-Four Hours a Day-the Book)
continued from page 5...

May 1942, and finally found lasting sobriety there, never to drink again for the rest of his life. Rich died on Mar. 25, 1965 (72 years old) with 22 years of sobriety in AA.

He originally wrote this material on small cards which he carried in his pocket, to aid him in his own sobriety. In 1948, he put it together in the little meditation book called "Twenty-Four Hours a Day, " at the request of the AA group in Daytona Beach, Florida, which they printed on the printing press at the county courthouse and began distributing all over the country under the sponsorship of their AA group. For many years it was the basic meditation book for all AA's.

The book sold over 80,000 copies during the first ten years alone, which means that over 10,000 copies a year had to be packaged and shipped out year after year, just to keep up with the demand. It did not take long for Richmond to become totally overwhelmed by the task. In 1953, he asked the New York AA office if they would take over this job, but his request was turned down.

In their defense, New York was desper-

ately short on money, staff, and space; they also already had their hands full with the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, which came out in April of that same year. They only just barely managed to cobble together a financial deal to get that vital book published.

Hazelden offered to publish and distribute the book in 1954. It is still widely used by AA members and groups today, with over eight million copies sold. The little book became the second most popular book in AA history (exceeded only by the Big Book). It explained how to carry out the Eleventh Step, how to practice the presence of God, and how to attain soul-balance and inner calm. It explained how to practice meditation by quieting the mind and entering the Divine Silence in order to enter the divine peace and calm and restore our souls.

At the top of each page Richmond lays out basic meat-and-potatoes information about how we used to behave when we were drinking, how we need to change our lives, and what we need to do in order to keep the AA fellowship together. Then at the bottom of each page he tells

us how to pray and meditate. This part of the book forms one of the ten greatest practical works on learning to live the spiritual life that have ever been written, in any century, including both the western world and the world of Asian religions.

The Eleventh Step says "Sought through prayer and meditation (a) to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for (b) knowledge of His will for us and (c) the power to carry that out." Richmond's little black book tells us how to actually do that.

His experience in the Oxford Group in 1939-1941 comes out strongly in "Twenty-Four Hours a Day," coming partly from Richmond's own experience in the group, and coming partly from his use of an Oxford Group work on prayer and meditation, "God Calling," by Two Listeners. For those who would like to bring modern AA back closer to Oxford Group beliefs and practices, "Twenty-Four Hours a Day" is the most strongly Oxford-Group-oriented work written by an early AA author. ▲

MARYLAND GENERAL SERVICE 2009 CALENDAR

Area Assembly (Budget)	December 13	Aberdeen, MD
Panel 58 Planning Meeting	January 10	Severna Park, MD
Area Committee Meeting	February 14	Unknown @ Present
NERAASA (Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly)	February 20-22	Portland, ME
NERD (Northeast Regional Delegates Meeting)	March 13-15	Pittsburg, PA
Area Assembly Meeting	March 21	District 17 – Western Maryland
Area 29 Mini-Conference	April 3-5	Holiday Inn; 7900 Washington Blvd., Columbia/Jessup, MD
General Service Conference	April 25-May 2	New York, NY
Area Assembly Meeting (Delegate's Report Back and Day of Sharing)	May 30	Unknown @ Present
Area 29 State Convention	June 18-21	Sheraton Four Seasons Hagerstown, MD
Northeast Regional Forum	June 26-28	Somerset, New Jersey
Area Committee	July 18	Lexington Park, MD
Area Assembly	August 22	Hagerstown, MD
Area Committee (Budget)	September 19	Crofton, MD
Area Assembly (Election)	October 17	Annapolis, MD
Area 29 Fall Conference	October 29-November 1	Carousel Hotel, Ocean City, MD
Area Assembly (Budget and Rotation of Officers)	December 12	Unknown @ Present

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