

MARGENSER

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

58th General Service Conference Area 29 Service Highlights

Tom R, Area 29 Delegate

Friends: During the annual General Service Conference, first year delegates are given the opportunity to present Area Service Highlights to the conference delegates during the week. Following are the highlights I presented at the 58th General Service Conference. (The text of this presentation will also appear in the Final Conference Report, which will be published in August, 2008.)

Maryland: Area 29 geographically consists of 21 of the 23 counties in Maryland, and serves 1,015 active listed groups in 47 districts. Maryland is served by 10 intergroups.

Described as America in Miniature, Maryland spans the landscape gamut from the Appalachian mountain range in western Maryland, to the rolling hills and farmland of central and southern Maryland, to the coastal plains of our Eastern Shore, the vibrant metropolitan areas of and around Annapolis and Baltimore and the Atlantic coast in Ocean City and Assateague Island.

Our Area holds five Area Assemblies and four Area Committee meetings each year, hosted by various districts all around Maryland. There are 19 committees serving Area 29, including our State Convention held in June in Hagerstown nestled in the mountains of western Maryland, and our Fall Conference held in October which moved this past year to 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.

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Confessions of a Bleeding Deacon

David R, Better Way of Life Group

1. We admitted we...still had a lot to learn.

As it dawned on me that I couldn't stop drinking on my own, along with that awakening came the shock that not much else of what I knew would hold up either. Recovery has been a struggle to discard the old ideas that kept me in the very kinky Bondage of Self. Being wrong but teachable has kept me on the Broad Highway while occasionally bouncing off the jersey walls.

My first meeting was just a meeting, not a group registered with GSO, at Maryland Rehabilitation Center. We averaged about six people on a good night. Attendees were mostly those who lived there getting job training after traumatic injuries. As often happens, the secretary moved on, asking me to take over getting speakers, making coffee, setting up, and cleaning up. My first attempt to "fix" AA was to jump start attendance. With a new sense of the great fellowship I'd found just beyond MRC's doors on Harford Road, I decided to guilt-trip people with "real" sobriety to make it their regular Monday meeting. Talking it up outside St. Luke's one night I was given a gentle suggestion by the late Carroll H. "If that meeting is fulfilling the Primary Purpose, carrying the AA message, it will thrive. If not, it will die out. Just make sure you ask some good AAs who know what that message is to lead the meeting." Sure enough, without promotion, good guys like John D. and Lawnmower Bob began to attend just because they liked a smaller group around the table. When they offered me a ride home Pride wouldn't let me accept. Lucky for me, Sloth made me change my mind; otherwise I'd not have been in the backseat to hear John teach me about postponing the first drink. Later my new friend Chuck H. became the next victim of service for its own sake. He handled things at Our Second

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"High Praise for the Charm of Recovering Alcoholics"

by *Fulton Oursler*

There are times when I wish I were an alcoholic. I mean I wish I were a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. The reason is that I consider the AA people the most charming in the world. Such is my considered opinion.

As a journalist, it has been my privilege to meet many people who are considered charming. I number among my friends stars and lesser lights on stage and cinema; writers are my daily diet; I know ladies and gentlemen of both political parties; I have been entertained in the White House; I've broken bread with kings, ambassadors and ministers; and I say that I would prefer an evening with my AA friends to any person I've indicated. I asked myself why I considered so charming these alcoholic caterpillars who have found their butterfly wings in AA. There are more reasons than one, but I can name a few.

The AA people are what they are, and they are what they were, because they are sensitive, imaginative, possessed of a sense of humor, an awareness of the universal truth. They are sensitive, which means they are hurt easily, and that helped them become alcoholics. But when they found their restoration they are as sensitive as ever; responsive to the beauty and the truth and eager about the intangible glories of this life. That makes them charming companions.

They are possessed of a sense of universal truth that is often new in their heart. This fact that this at-one-moment with God's universe had never been awakened within them is the reason they drank. They have found a power greater than themselves, which they diligently serve. And that gives them a charm that never was elsewhere on the land and sea; it makes you know that God is charming, because the AA people reflect his mercy and forgiveness.

They are imaginative, and that helped make them alcoholics. Some of them drank to flog their imaginations onto greater efforts. Others guzzled only to block out unendurable visions that arose in their imaginations. But when they found their restorations, their imagination is responsive to new incantations and their talk abounds with

color and might, and that makes them charming companions, too.

They are possessed of a sense of humor. Even in their cups they have been known to be damnably funny. Often it was being forced to take seriously the little and mean things of life that made them seek their escape in the bottle. But when they found their restoration, their sense of humor finds a blessed freedom and they are able to laugh at themselves, the very height of self-conquest.

Go to their meetings and listen to their laughter. At what are they laughing? At ghoulish memories over which weaker souls would cringe in useless remorse. And that makes them wonderful people to be with by candlelight. ▲

Fulton Oursler was a magazine editor, religious author, and Hollywood screenwriter, and was an early Oxford Group member and friend to AA. He passed away in the year 1952.

His official relationship with AA is as follows: Sept. 30, 1939, the very popular weekly *Liberty Magazine*, headed by Fulton Oursler, carried a piece titled "Alcoholics and God" by Morris Markey (who was influenced to write the article by Charles Towns). It generated about 800 inquiries from around the nation. Oursler (author of *The Greatest Story Ever Told*) became good friends with Bill W and later served as a Trustee and member of the Grapevine editorial board. In Oct. 1949, Dr. William D. Silkworth and Fulton Oursler joined the Alcoholic Foundation Board.

THE OXFORD GROUP – PART 1

Ron M, BYOL Group, Easton

The evolution of Alcoholics Anonymous can be traced along many lines. The big book picks up the story as it is presented to Bill W. by Ebby and shortly thereafter Bill is introduced to the Oxford Group in New York. On his trip to Akron, Bill meets up with Dr. Bob who has already been associated with the Oxford Group for some time. The subsequent events are well known to most of the members of AA. What is generally not known is what the Oxford Group was and what they

contributed to the program we know today as Alcoholics Anonymous.

The man who was most often referred to as the leader and founder of the movement was Dr. Frank N. D. Buchman. Frank Buchman was born on June 4, 1878, and raised in a deeply religious Lutheran home in Pennsylvania. He was baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran Church in Pennsburg, Pennsylvania. After attending Mount Airy Seminary and a year abroad he took over a small parish in Philadelphia. In 1908 Dr. Buchman traveled to England to attend a religious convention and while there is said to have experienced a religious conversion. While listening to one of the speakers on the subject of "The Power of the Cross" he had a vision of the person crucified. He stated that he experienced a very strong emotion and a will to surrender and experience a spiritual life. When asked to recall any sensations of that moment he said:

"I remember one sensation very distinctly; it was a vibrant feeling up and down my spine, as if a strong current of life had suddenly been poured into me. That followed on my surrender. No; it came at the same time."

Immediately, he also felt the need to seek forgiveness from those he had harmed. He promptly wrote letters of apology seeking forgiveness. It is reported that he received no reply from any of the letters but experienced a deep satisfaction at having done his part in setting things right. This was apparently the seed of the Oxford Group principal of restitution and possibly the foundation of steps 8 & 9.

From 1908 to 1917 Dr. Buchman worked and traveled around the world and eventually came up with what he called "Principals of Personal Evangelism". One of his trips took him to the Orient and in 1917 he met up with Samuel M. Shoemaker who in a few years would play a huge part in Bill's story and recovery. In January 1918 Sam Shoemaker met Frank Buchman who told him of his newly acquired "Four Absolutes of Honesty, Purity, Love and Unselfishness". Years later Sam Shoemaker acknowledged that he could trace the inception of his ministry back to the night with Buchman when he decided to let go of self

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A Twelve-Step Story

Ed H, Southern Maryland

They buried Bill R the other day. Bill twelve stepped me some years ago. Let me tell you the story.

I had been drunk for several days straight, and topped it all off with another DUI. On a Sunday morning, after being released, I was drinking with a friend in the back room of a country store crying about the trouble I was in and the possibility of doing real jail time. My friend had seen his share of courtrooms and casually said, "You need to get into a rehab. It will look good for the judge. I know the director of the local rehabilitation center; I'll call him for you".

I had never heard of such a thing as a rehab, but what did I have to lose? An hour or so later, I was at Bill's front door meekly entering his living room. I had no earthly idea what I was doing there, and all I could think about was getting away and going down to the VFW. I mentioned the rehab to Bill, but he told me it had been some time since he worked there. I definitely wanted to leave then.

Bill shared his story, and I really didn't understand what he was saying, or why he was saying it to me. The only thing I remembered was that he had been hospitalized in a mental institution more than 40 times and finally found permanent sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous some ten years earlier. I thanked Bill, left his home and headed for the "V" to drink the rest of the day away.

Something very unusual happened the next morning. I woke up and went to work. That was strange in itself, but I didn't drink that morning. It was the first time in years I hadn't gone through the morning ritual of throwing up two or three drinks to get one down. It was a very shaky day, but later on I confided in a coworker about my recent troubles. Unbeknownst to me, she admitted being a member of Alanon and urged me to go to an AA meeting with her that night. I didn't know much about Alanon or AA and remember thinking I didn't need anything like that. "But", she

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(Confessions of a Deacon) continued from page 1...
Chance with much more class than me.

Somewhere in there it became clear that my "spiritual antenna" wasn't working because abstinence from alcohol by way of the Marijuana Maintenance program carried too much static. After ten months I did a thorough First Step, got a true sobriety date, and followed with a Second and a Third. My sponsor, Danny, must have pointed out the Big Book's caution just after the Third Step prayer, that our decision could have little effect unless immediately followed by a housecleaning. With the wrinkles out of my belly though, simply not drinking made life pretty good. I proceeded to procrastinate in taking a moral inventory while miraculously staying dry and accumulating four more years' worth of resentments, sexual misconduct, and fears. Finally the victim of my ruined AA romance warned me it would happen again with someone else unless I moved on with the Fourth. I set the appointment to do a Fifth Step at the State Convention. Pride came to my rescue this time since I wouldn't let myself show up empty-handed. The writing done, I told it all and experienced again that powerlessness and imperfection were the reason I needed a Higher Power.

I had joined a real Home Group--Punks and Bimbos-- as "Jimbo" lovingly still calls us. Established as a Young People's group, it got weird when two members were forced by "Rule Number Whatever" to discontinue because they were turning 35. God forbid we have some maturity around to dampen our fun! Because some of our folks were involved with establishing the Maryland Conference of Young People in AA, however, we learned that "Young is somebody who knows they need to grow." The age rule and Young People's designation was abandoned. Years later we're a lot older, only a bit more mature, and have a large-print Big Book on the podium.

At least half of us came to AA with blue slips, the "Nudge from the Judge" that was a major concern for AA in the mid '80s. Maryland General Service issued a call for each group to seriously consider whether this arrangement might be a violation of Traditions. We sincerely believed the benefit of signing slips outweighed the challenges so our GSR took that informed group

conscience to the Assembly. When the vote went the other way the minority were asked to consider the greater need for substantial unanimity. We revised our policy without regret, understanding that a narrow view of group autonomy negatively affects AA as a whole. Years later, that group humbly appreciates the respect it gets for conducting regular inventories and staying in the mainstream of AA

The mistakes continue and the Tenth Step shows me why. There's still self-centered fear in the form of self-righteousness. Tonight I left what was supposed to be a Seventh Step meeting because the speaker with 25 years' sobriety still wasn't sober after thirty minutes. I went to my sponsor's home group and told on myself and asked for help.

It's hard getting sober but it's easy staying sober. Once the drink problem has been removed we must stay vigilant against the alcoholic thinking that disturbs us. Through prayer and meditation we come to rely upon intuition as a working part of the mind. For every one step back, we have Twelve Steps forward.▲

(Service Highlights) continued from page 1...

boardwalks and sounds of the ocean waves in Ocean City.

We enjoy continued cooperation and communication with our intergroups through our Intergroup Liaison Committee. Area 29 maintains an informative and oft-read website at www.marylandaa.org which includes district pages where workshops and other district events are posted.

Our Area becomes informed on Conference Agenda Items through 6 Regional Panels that meet in February and March of each year, which endues our delegate during a weekend Mini Conference in April. Our Regional Panel process and Mini-Conference mirror the committee process at the General Service Conference, and give everyone in our fellowship the opportunity to participate, become informed and have a voice in Alcoholics Anonymous.

We are blessed with many talented, enthusiastic people who serve as GSRs, DCMs, and in our committees and conventions. It is an honor and a privilege to serve with these wonderful folks and it's helping me stay sober.▲

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's your question?

Question: How can I get a copy of the MARGENSER?

Answer: You can get a free copy in the following ways:

- DCMs/GSRs can pick up copies of the Margenser for each of the groups within their district when they are distributed at the Assembly meetings.
- GSRs often have copies of the Margenser at their home group.
- You can print as many current or past editions as you want off the Margenser website page at Margenser@marylandAA.org.
- You can request a copy be mailed to you by submitting your name, and full address to the website above.

Send in your question regarding AA to MARGENSER@marylandaa.org and we'll use all resources available to get you an answer.

DISTRICT & INTERGROUP EVENTS 2nd Quarter

District 26: Saturday, May 31st; Picnic: Centennial Park, Columbia, MD. 10AM-8PM. Open to all. Speaker @ 2PM. Tickets \$7.00 Space is limited. Burgers, Dogs, Chips, Sodas provided. Covered dish gladly accepted.

Annapolis Intergroup: Sunday, June 15th; 7th Annual Family Picnic & BBQ. Quiet Waters Park, Annapolis, MD. Sassafras Pavilion. 11AM-5PM. Burgers, Hot dogs, Sodas furnished—please bring a side dish, casserole or dessert to share. Speaker Meeting 4-5PM. Tickets: \$15 which includes \$5 Park entry fee. Children 12 and under free. Ticket info @ www.annapolisareaintergroup.org or 410-268-5441

July 4th: Annapolis Harbor Fireworks Cruise; Soft drinks and munchies, Music—Watch the fireworks from the boat. Limited to the first 100 people. Cost: \$35 Boarding 6:45p.m.—leave promptly @ 7:00p.m.— return 10:00p.m. Ticket info @ www.annapolisareaintergroup.org or 410-268-5441

District 9: Sunday, June 8th, "3rd Annual Spiritually Breakfast." Best Western in Westminster, MD. \$16.00 per person.—no sales at the door. Buffet Breakfast at 9 am; guest speaker at 10 am; ends @ 11:30 am.

July 25-27th; 2nd Annual "Serenity on the Mountain Top" Camping Trip; William Houck Area of Cunningham Falls State Park, Thurmont, MD. Campfire meetings Fri, & Sat. nights. \$25/night; \$4 registration fee. For reservation and fee information, email activities_chair@d9mdaa.org am.

District 36: Friday, June 27th – Sunday, June 29th "Spirituality Retreat- Step Out Into the Sun." William W. Winpisinger Technology Center, 24494 Placid Harbor Way, Hollywood, MD 20636. \$175 includes two nights lodging and all meals for the retreat. Registration \$20.

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. Email all correspondence to Margenser@marylandAA.org or mail to Maryland General Services, P.O. Box 2683, Salisbury, MD 21802. The submission deadline for the next issue is July 25, 2008.

It's never been this easy to conduct a Workshop!!!

The Workshop Committee has developed a "Traveling Workshop Road Show" to make it as easy as possible for a group, district or intergroup to conduct a workshop. The "Road Show" will travel to your location and provide the speakers for the workshop.

Here is all you have to do:

1. Pick a pair of topics from the list below
2. Set the location and time
3. Pick a date for the workshop
4. Provide coffee and "goodies"

Suggested Topics

General AA History
Oxford Group
Fitzhugh Mayo
Jack Alexander Article
12 Traditions
Area 29 Organization
Mrs. Marty Mann

Maryland AA History
Big Book
Lois W.
Liberty Magazine (AA & God)
The Concepts
AA Districts
Sister Ignatia
Washingtonian Movement

Local AA History
Jim Burwell
Anne S.
12 Steps
Intergroup
DCM's & GSR's
Ebby

MARYLAND GENERAL SERVICE 2008 CALENDAR

MD State Convention	June 12-15	Sheraton Four Points Hotel, Hagerstown, MD
Area Committee	July 19	North East, MD
Area Assembly	August 16	Frederick, MD
Area Committee	September 20	Ocean City, MD
Area Assembly (Inventory)	October 18	Howard County, MD
Fall Conference	Oct 30-Nov 2	Carousel Resort Hotel, Ocean City, MD
Area Committee (Budget)	November 15	Crofton, MD
Area Assembly (Budget)	December 13	Aberdeen, MD

Religion vs. Spirituality

Steve K, As Bill Sees It

Finding the God of my understanding has saved my life and kept me in AA this time around! Having and leading a spiritual way of life, where “doing the next right thing” and “practicing these principles in all of our affairs” has become my daily aim/goal. And, it is working. I have come a long, long way since the days where I was punching my guardian angel! Let me explain...

I was brought up in a fairly strict religious family in the sixties and whether or not it was their intent, what the church drove home in ME were these pertinent and damaging facts: Follow the 10 commandments, go to church every Sunday, follow all the edicts of the church, or... “you will be going to Hell”! This is what I heard and believed as an impressionable kid raised this way. I was confused, full of anger and rage, because they never explained their teaching and preaching, rather they just told us to DO IT. I was never much the type who liked being told what to do (imagine that from an alcoholic!) and I remember one time in the 2nd grade, I was seen swinging and punching the air behind me. The teacher asked me what I was doing and I told her I was angry and wanted to belt my guardian angel. Mortified, she took me to the office and called my mother. I was subsequently punished. The bottom line, is that this episode and many others resulted in me growing to hate the Church and the punishing God that I had no chance of ever pleasing.

Having the thought firmly planted in my subconscious that I was indeed bound for hell, I made the best of my time here on earth and figured that I had a lot of debauchery to squeeze into my years above ground. So I drank, drugged, lived rather loosely, lied, cheated, stole, gambled and did whatever was in front of me that would fill the void I always felt in the pit of my gut for 30+ years. I never cared about the consequences of my actions and I was spiritually, emotionally and mentally bankrupt. I will never forget my last drink—looking at the empty bottom of my second gallon of vodka that I had consumed over a weekend, sitting alone with money in my pocket, cars in the driveway, a nice house, big screen TV

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(A Twelve Step Story) continued from page 3...
told me,” I could have a drinking problem and it might be worth my while.” I don’t know how I kept it together the rest of the day, but I didn’t drink. She picked me up that night; I went to my first AA meeting and haven’t had a drink since.

For a long time, I thought that was all there was to my little tale, but let me tell you the rest of the story. Bill didn’t get to many meetings because of his age and health, but every once in a while I would run into him, reminisce how we first met, and thank him for his generosity. He would always smile ear to ear and sometimes call his wife over to introduce me and remind her of the Sunday morning they invited me into their home, but I never saw the real importance of what Bill had done for me.

When I first heard of Bill’s passing, I called a few old-timers to let them know the sad news. Patty W. thanked me for calling and asked how I knew Bill. I told her the twelve-step story and mentioned I didn’t stop drinking that same day, but did the next, and went on about going to the meeting that night and never drinking again. What she told me next hit home like a ton of bricks. She said that “when one alcoholic twelve steps another and the first AA finishes telling their story, quite often, the AA being twelve stepped is never again the same person”. I truly believe, now, that Bill sharing his experience, strength, and hope with me was primarily the reason I didn’t drink that next morning. I had been changed and didn’t even know it. How could I go all these years without recognizing the power of that twelve-step call?

When I walked up to the casket, Bill’s wife turned and smiled; she extended her hand and said, “Oh, Bill would be so glad you’re here.” I had just celebrated my 22-year anniversary and humbly asked if she would place my chip in Bill’s coffin. I told her it would mean so much to me, and she graciously accepted my token. She called over her daughter, who I had never met, and we shared the twelve-step story. The daughter had just recently celebrated two years’ sobriety, and we all beamed with the satisfaction of the moment. As I was leav-

ing the funeral parlor, Bill’s daughter asked that I never stop telling the twelve-step story. She just knew Bill would smile each time I did so.

Thanks again Bill. I hope you’re smiling; I know I am. ♣

(Oxford Group) continued from page 2...

and allow God to guide his life. Also, in 1918 the first house party (to become a recognized Oxford Group technique and possibly the forerunner of today’s AA meetings) was held in Kuling, China.

The first American Assembly held in June 1936 in Stockbridge, Massachusetts drew 10,000 people and in Minnesota there were 40 public and private Oxford Groups. When asked, the Oxford Group members stated that the secret of the growth was listening to God and following his guidance regardless of cost or consequence. Everything done by the Oxford Group was done by teams. Everyone who had surrendered or was changed was considered a member of the overall team.

The most successful teams traveled extensively and were welcomed guests at the numerous “House Parties” which were usually held in some fashionable inn, summer resort, hotel or wealthy home and at times held in some other less fashionable locations. The parties were by invitation and were usually attended by several prominent people. It is reported that among American personalities associated with the Oxford Group were Mr. & Mrs. Henry Ford, Mr. & Mrs. Harry Guggenheim, Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia of New York City, Joe DiMaggio, Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, Senator Harry Truman, General Pershing, Mae West, and Mrs. M. Edison Hughes the widow of Thomas A. Edison.

In the 1930s the Oxford Group was at its strongest and its beliefs and principles were spread far and wide. Bill Wilson was one of these members in New York, New York and Dr. Bob Smith in Akron, Ohio. As members, both of them were well versed in the attitudes and beliefs of the Oxford Group. As time went on both founders were able to take what they felt would help their fledgling efforts in establishing what came to be known as Alcoholic Anonymous. ♣

(To Be Continued)

(Religion vs. Spirituality continued from page 6)...
blaring and two dogs who wouldn't even look at me! My wife and kids had gone out west without me to celebrate Thanksgiving with family and they left me alone because that is what they said I had demanded. Nothing fixed me this time, not the liquor, nothing! I felt those four horsemen approaching fast, right out of the Big Book. Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration and Despair were stalking me and I was feeling like there was no hope for me in this life anymore.

That feeling of utter loneliness and incomprehensible demoralization that the Big Book talks about, had 100% engulfed me and, by the grace of God, the next day I somehow surrendered and went to a meeting in Severna Park. I met people who welcomed me, told me to keep coming back and assured me that I was loved. I looked at them like they were nuts and their GOD talk had my head spinning. "Here we go again with the religion!" was my initial thought, but thankfully I continued to show up and it finally sunk into my hard head that AA was not a program about Religion; it was a program about finding a Power, any Power, greater than myself to lead me from my own way—which ultimately had always failed and resulted in my being a drunken, lonely person with little hope. At my second meeting, one old-timer gave me a hug and told me, "Keep coming back kid!" I was 49 years old at that time and hadn't been called a kid in years. I chuckled and later found out that this guy had forty-six years of continuous sobriety and I nearly fainted. His longevity in sobriety alone had put forth a challenge to me. If nothing else, I had always respected my elders, so I kept coming back. Plus, he was right; I was a kid, at least emotionally.

I was fortunate enough to find a sponsor who worked with me and helped me to separate the religious God I was tortured with from the new all-loving God that was out there for the taking... One who loved me unconditionally and was there for me 24/7. I began to pray a lot; first were the prayers of gratitude, and then gradually the prayers from the Big Book (3rd, 7th and 11th step prayers) that freed me from the alcoholic torture that had bound me since the 1960's! I was like a new man! Imagine going to bed every night with no guilt, no shame, just love and hope!

Yes, the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous have saved my life and given me a new happiness that religion never did. Maybe one day I will venture back into my religious past, but for now, the conscious contact I have with the God of my understanding (or is it the God of my misunderstanding?) and the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous have given me joy beyond my wildest dreams! ♡

What Does "Completely" Mean?

Jerry M. Crofton Open Group

I'd come around the rooms in 1978 and in 1980. I had a DUI in 1979, but sought legal help for that. I had lost one marriage and knew that alcohol was causing problems, but I guess I didn't have a good working definition of "unmanageable."

During those times around the rooms, I went to meetings and didn't drink and counted the number of days I didn't drink. After I had gone back to the old ways, I looked back on my experience in AA and convinced myself that I had made a strong and serious effort to get sober and AA just didn't work for me.

Now mind you, I didn't work with any sponsor and didn't make any real effort to "work" the steps, or even let them work me.

I went back through a rehab in July of 1985 because I had a second marriage falling apart. I started to look at the steps differently and to look much more closely at their meaning to me. I got a sponsor, went to a variety of meetings, got involved in service and worked through the steps. In this way, I was able to relate

the principles covered by the steps to the way I should try to live my life. I have kept involved and worked with many others over the almost 23 years since.

What this experience has caused me to do is to reflect on the second sentence in "How it Works": "Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and woman who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves."

I have to keep checking myself to see where I am on the "completely" continuum. Am I staying active, working with others, and trying to practice these principles in all my affairs? Am I being honest in letting people see "me" rather than some façade that my ego wants to put up?

How are you doing with
"completely"? ♡

Take the Public Information Challenge

Michelle M, Area 29 Public Information Chair

It has been brought to the Public Information Committee's attention that many libraries in Area 29 do not have the English or Spanish version of the Alcoholics Anonymous book on their shelves.

The Public Information Committee would like to reach out to each DCM and find out the need for supplying these books in their district.

Is your district up to reaching out and seeing where we may help spread the word?

If your district is interested in getting involved, please contact the P.I. Committee at Area29PICChair@yahoo.com

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.

MARGENSER

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Salisbury, MD 21802

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