



LIFELINE



*I am responsible
when anyone, any-
where, reaches out
for help, I want the
hand of A.A. always
to be there, and for
that I am responsible.*

life-line | \ 'līf- līn : 1. A rope or line used for life-saving, typically one thrown to rescue someone in diffi-
culties in water. 2. A thing on which someone depends for a means of escape from a difficult situation.

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com>

STEP EIGHT FOR AN AGNOSTIC

Unquestionably, this was a complete game-changer in my recovery. Despite being an agnostic, I can testify that the method that I was shown was instrumental in experiencing a non-God-centered spiritual awakening. You may wonder if an agnostic can even have a spiritual experience, however, I hope to demonstrate why I can call the way I experienced Step Eight spiritual.

The first section of the AA Big Book is called *The Doctor's Opinion*. In it, Dr Silkworth makes the following statement:

"...unless this person can experience an entire psychic change, there is very little hope of his recovery."

He mentions the importance of the psychic change again, so clearly he considered it a pivotal aspect to successful recovery. Then, we move on to Chapter Two. Bill W. called this chapter *There Is a Solution*. He describes a conversation between Roland Hazard III, an early AA pioneer, and Dr.

Carl Jung, a world-famous psychiatrist, psychotherapist, and founder of analytical psychology. In a similar way to Dr. Silkworth, Jung tells Roland that, in his experience, alcoholics will not recover unless they have what he called a "vital spiritual experience". Please note that neither

Dr. Silkworth nor Dr. Jung mentions God when describing the necessity of experiencing these spiritual phenomena during the recovery journey. The statements these two men of science made are relevant to my experience with Step Eight. I'll describe what happened while I was making a list of all the people I had harmed, and you can draw your conclusions.

Before I share the method I was shown, it may be interesting to go back to the Big Book and quote Bill's instructions for the Eighth Step. Remarkably, he describes the whole step in two short sentences:

"We have a list of all persons we have harmed and to whom we are willing to make amends. We made it when we took inventory."
p. 76

Bill's description of Step Eight implies that every AA member can make their list however they choose. Usually, members are shown how to do the steps by their sponsors, who in turn share how they did it with

their sponsors. Since coming to AA, I have seen several different methods of tackling this step. I will be grateful that I was shown this method for the rest of my life. It was so powerful that it was life-changing. I can confidently report that, despite remaining agnostic, Step Eight facilitated the "vital spiritual experience" described by Dr. Jung in Chapter Two of the Big Book. Moreover, it would also be honest to call it the "entire psychic change" described by Dr. Silkworth. I've seen the method that I was shown several times, as it even appeared when I Googled the words "Step Eight". The method is drawn out in three equally spaced vertical columns on writing pad or exercise book.

In the first column, I was asked to write the name of the person, place, or institution that I harmed. Then, in the second column, I had to record the specific nature of the harm. Finally, in the third column, I had to write down how I would have felt if I had experienced the same harm I caused.

The Person, Place, Thing, or Institution that I Harmed	The Exact Nature of the Harm	How Would I Feel if this Specific Harm Was Done to Me?
		(continued on page 2)

(continued) In Steps Four through Seven, I learned that, for me, the whole essence of my suffering, both as a dry and wet drunk, was a victim belief system that I developed in childhood. There was no question that at that age, I certainly was a victim of harm acted out by my primary caregivers. Sadly, this belief system began a miserable and defeatist way of experiencing how I interacted with others. It became increasingly ingrained as I passed out of childhood and adolescence. As a supposed adult, I took this belief to a new level. The victim belief system was grounded in resentment, which I felt unable to let go of. It was at the very heart of the self-destructive tendencies of active alcoholism. I acted out this belief in every area of life. The only thing that helped to subdue the painful effects of the victim mindset was copious amounts of alcohol.

I'm telling you this because my perception of reality had become so distorted, blaming others for supposed harm, that it never occurred to me that I might also be a victimizer. As I discovered in steps four and five, I was a classic example of the type of alcoholic you frequently hear described in AA meetings. Namely, people who are hurt go on to hurt others.

The truth was that far from being a helpless victim, I was frequently a bully and a user of people. What do I mean by a user of people? I would go to any lengths to fill a poignant loneliness and inner emptiness. More often than not, this was at other people's expense. The uncomfortable truth was that I was a taker and not a giver. *Selfishness – self-centeredness! That we think is the root of our troubles.*" (BB p. 62)

In Step 8, I finally faced the truth. As I

sat there at the kitchen table, one person after another went onto the list. I harmed a lot of people, but most of all, I injured myself. My sponsor made me aware of a powerful existential truth: what goes around, comes around. In harming others subconsciously, I had also caused considerable harm to myself. My sponsor made sure that the list was exhaustive. I wondered how I might feel if I found myself on the receiving end of how I had treated people.

As I wrote, tears started rolling down my cheeks—this was irregular, as I rarely cried. Suddenly, I broke down completely. The floodgates of guilt, shame, and remorse came pouring out. I wept like a child when I saw on paper the pain I had caused others.

From the perspective of the *"entire psychic change"* and *"vital spiritual experience,"* it was a critical moment. I knew that I could never be the same person again! For the first time, I connected with a part of myself that I had buried since childhood. This step had such an impact that I was suddenly transported to a new level of surrender. There, I had my first true encounter with humility.

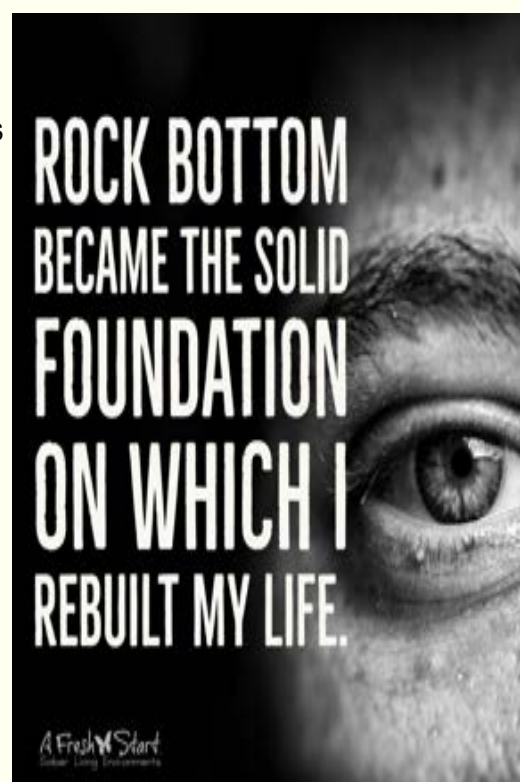
Another powerful effect of this work was that I was able to realize empathy and compassion. Today, I know they had always been there but were concealed behind thick layers of selfish dishonesty. I had caused pain to others and the truth of the Step Eight list was staring me in the face. I arrived at the Steps as a mean-spirited, self-centered alcoholic and came out with a heartfelt desire to become a better person.

At about the same time as I was going through the program, I was attending a school of spirituality in London. Its focus

was on metaphysical spirituality. I'll never forget one particular lecture, during which the lecturer made a statement that had a powerful effect. It didn't matter that I didn't fully understand what he said. It completely resonated at an intuitive, perhaps even spiritual level. *"Compassion,"* he said, *"is a quality that contains the highest vibrational frequency in the conscious universe."* It certainly got my attention. As someone who had just connected to empathy and compassion, it gave me the confidence to acknowledge that I had truly experienced a powerful spiritual awakening as a result of this step. Despite being an unbeliever, I couldn't deny the truth of what I'd just experienced.

Quite literally, it was the entire psychic change that Dr. Silkworth explained in the *Doctor's Opinion*. Moreover, it was also the vital spiritual experience described in Chapter Two of the Big Book by Carl Jung. I now understand that belief in the traditional idea of a monotheistic God isn't required for me to experience the life-changing gifts of this program.

<https://aafornagnostics.com/blog/step-8/>



“Alcoholics Anonymous Should Remain Forever Nonprofessional, but Our Service Centers May Employ Special Workers”

Written to protect us from ourselves, the Traditions reflect the collective problem solving experience during our fellowships first dozen years. In the 60 plus years since they were proposed then adopted, none have ever been changed. What held true then holds true today.

Bill W., says in his essay about Tradition 8 in the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions; “Freely have ye received, freely give.” In the next paragraph Bill reminds us, “Almost from the beginning, we have been positive that face-to-face work with the alcoholic who still suffers could be based only on the desire to help and be helped.

Tradition 8 guides our financial respon-

sibilities telling us that Twelfth Step work is never to be paid for. As A.A. members representing the A.A. program we are all volunteers and the only expertise we claim is our own experiences as active alcoholics and our individual recovery through the practice of the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics

work possible. Someone has to sweep the floors, answer our phones, edit and produce our literature and “man the AA life-lines.” None of these paid workers are considered to be professionalizing Twelfth Step work. Their jobs are to make Twelfth Step work possible.

In our Home Group none of our members are paid for the work they do. Someone sets up the chairs, someone lays out our literature display, someone provides our coffee (out of their pocket, not group funds), someone pays our rent and keeps our books, someone attends business meetings and provides reports and all are volunteers. The rent we pay does help pay for the clean, climate-controlled, facility in which we meet. Those paid employees make Twelfth Step work possible but in no way do they professionalize Twelfth Step work.

A wise old-timer once remarked, “The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous often provide just enough rope for us to hang ourselves.”

<https://www.saltlakeaa.org/2012/08/tradition-8/>



Anonymous. This one-on-one sharing is the basis for our fellowships existence and the key to the spiritual experience of one alcoholic relating to another alcoholic, thereby saving two lives.

The Twelve and Twelve also defines SPECIAL WORKERS as professionals or paid employees who make Twelfth Step

R. H. SMITH, M. D.
2ND NATIONAL BLDG. AKRON, OHIO
TELEPHONE: ME-8521 REG. NO. _____

FOR alcoholics
ADDRESS _____ DATE Feb 1937

Always remember it

1. Trust God
2. Clean house
3. Help others

[Signature] M. D.

NR 1 2 3 INF.

SERVICE IS THE SECRET

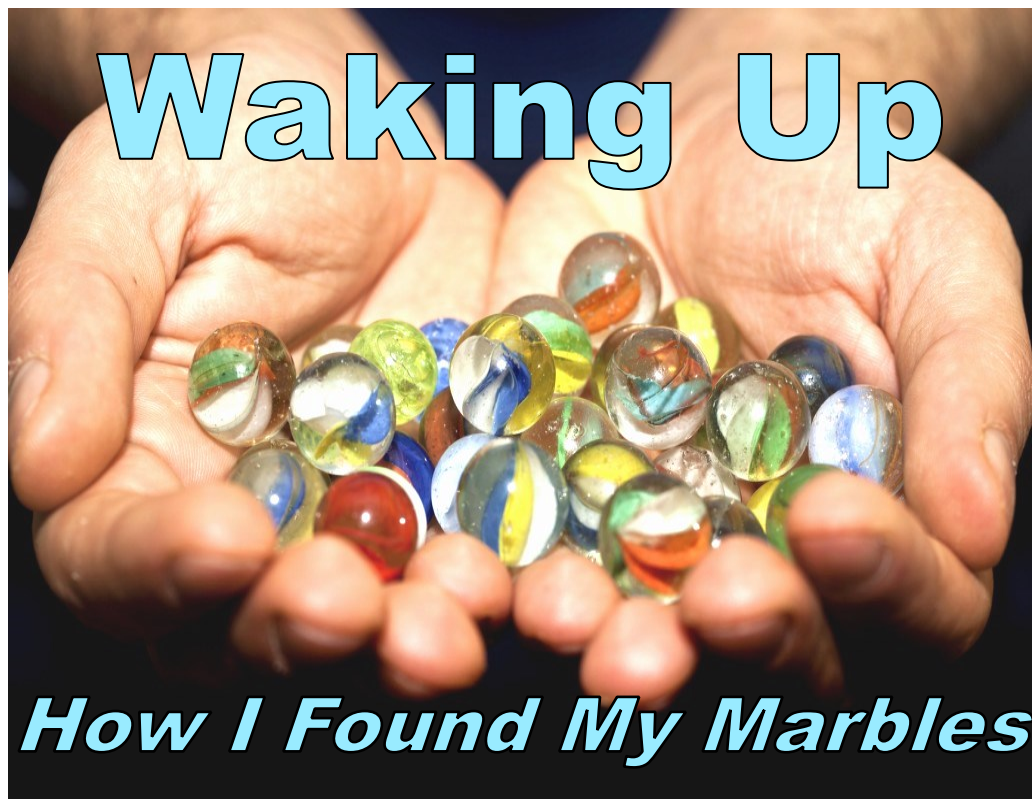
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR
12TH STEP WORK

District 35 Treatment Committee
Is asking for people to carry the message into Treatment Facilities
ALPAS in La Plata – Wednesday Nights 7:00pm – 8:00pm
ANCHOR on Golden Beach Road – Tuesday Nights 7:30pm-8:30pm

CONTACT:
JEANINE 301-751-8115 DAN 301-751-1064

Our primary purpose is to help the still suffering alcoholic. SMIA is committed to this principle and provides a 24x7 Telephone Service. We need phone volunteers! Go to our website, www.somdintergroup.org. Click on the Phone List link, complete the online form - this is a secure method to add your name to the 12-Step Call List. This protected information is only shared with the Phone Committee Chair. You will be amazed before you're half way through.

It was the beginning of summer 1987. I hadn't eaten or slept in nearly a week. I had just been through an arduous trial whereby the state put a man behind bars for rape and attempted murder. An incident in which I was assaulted, choked and nearly strangled to death. I had been self medicating for months, since the incident occurred the previous fall. I felt alone, shamed, and afraid. I slowly began coming apart mentally is all I can relate. I went out of control a few days later. My brother had to take me to the local emergency room, I have no memory of this. While waiting to be seen, I was told that I pulled the fire alarm, in a semi state of psychosis. Minutes later I was fighting off security and several other large hospital staff members. I think I weighed about 110 at the time. They had trouble subduing me, but finally, I was put in a straight jacket, then onto a stretcher and sent 90 miles away to the nearest psych hospital with an available bed. The next thing I can recall, is waking up in a bed in a mental institution. From that point, I just remember spending most of the day being observed while meeting and array of very different people. I felt afraid and confused. Then I started counseling sessions and began their day program, which consisted of walks outside, making a leather key chain, and other group activities including a dance. Housed in the other half of the building, were people there for substance use disorder related issues, so I actually got treated for some of my problems while I was there. I felt relived but guilty. Finally, after six weeks of confinement, I was released to come home. I had a new lease on life as they say. I was put on medication and began seeing a counselor and psychiatrist regularly. Unfortunately, being the good addict I was, I got feeling better and stopped doing the things that were making me feel better. This is a pattern I was to repeat several times before



“getting it”. It took several mental hospital stays, a bad car accident, and finally, a night in jail in a manic state, following a night of self medicating with alcohol, for me to realize, at last, that I couldn't safely use alcohol again. I was given the gift of desperation and surrendered my will to my Higher Power that morning in the wee hours in that jail. I felt a calming sense of peace go through my body. Before that though, I spent a lot of time bouncing in and out of hospitals for various problems: overmedicated, not the right medication, undermedicated. They couldn't decide what was wrong with me exactly. I did have six years sober at one time, following the car accident which put me in a partial body cast for weeks. I relapsed, however. I know now that it was resentments that took me back out, and back into hell. I was now isolating and trading one addiction for another now. July 16, 1999, two weeks after getting out of jail, I quit doing the drugs as well as the alcohol. Even in early recovery, I spent much of the day chain smoking cigarettes and staring out of the windows, so those early years are foggy. I still felt mostly sad and fearful a lot.

Through everything I learned, I was able to work through the Twelve Steps, and was able to quit smoking cigarettes, and get a degree from a community college. I began to feel good about myself again. Like they say, I got my marbles back sometime during all of this, and then it took me another seven to ten years, or more, to learn how to use them...I'm still learning. Today, I continue to take bipolar meds and see a therapist regularly. I work the steps, come to meetings, talk with others and help another struggling alcoholic/addict, I've learned a lot of lessons, both in and out of recovery...some the hard way. I give back because it was so freely given to me, it feels good to help someone else, and it helps me continue to stay sober One Day at a Time. The Promises do come true. God continues to teach me lessons, I have momentary setbacks and 'bad days' from time to time, but it keeps getting better, and working the program has gotten easier. For this, I thank God, AA, and all the people who came before me that lead me along my path into recovery. - Anonymous

Washingtonians Where Are They Now?

Maybe I should have known I was an alcoholic when I went to school so drunk that I couldn't make it to class, and instead passed out in my high school's basement boiler room for six hours. Or when I misjudged the amount of 150 proof rum it would take to make my senior class retreat tolerable, and vomited all over the retreat director. Perhaps the bare fact of my daily drinking and the associated lies and theft it took to maintain it should have clued me in to the fact that I had a problem with alcohol. It didn't: my denial was etched in granite, and the well-intentioned teachers, parents, and coaches trying to divert me from the disastrous path I was on were easily ignored.

After several turbulent, painful years, I came to realize that the immense loneliness and despair that I felt related somehow to my drinking. Hoping to learn to "drink like a gentleman" – I couldn't comprehend a life without alcohol – I made a phone call one night that led me to Alcoholics Anonymous, via a local detox center. In the rooms of AA I learned the fatal nature of my illness, and in the Big Book and fellowship found a power that enabled me to stay sober one day at a time. I had just turned twenty-one years old.

The power that I found in Alcoholics Anonymous has kept me sober for nearly five years now, and has given me a life beyond my wildest dreams. Marriage, a house, an interesting job, an education – all of these things have come my way as a result of being sober and applying the principles I've learned

in AA to my daily affairs. Even more importantly, I've developed a deeply satisfying spiritual life as a result of working the Steps as directed by the Big Book and a loving, caring sponsor. The past five years, however, have had a few "downs" as well as plenty of "ups" and a recent one of those "downs" has reminded me of the importance of the concept of singleness of purpose, both to my own personal recovery – and to the survival of our Fellowship.

The phrase "singleness of purpose" can be found in the account of the Fifth Tradition in the "Twelve and Twelve." Tradition Five itself reads "Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers." Our Preamble, printed in the grapevine, also discusses singleness of purpose: "Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety." The chapters on Traditions Five and Six in the "Twelve and Twelve" eloquently describe how absolutely essential this concept is to the survival of AA, stating "The very life of our Fellowship requires the preservation of this principle."

The "Twelve and Twelve" goes on (in the chapter on Tradition Ten) to describe the Washingtonian Movement, a nineteenth-century movement among alcoholics that was, initially, similar to AA in many ways. Over one hundred thousand alcoholics sobered up with the Washingtonians, before the movement self-destructed in the chaos caused by involvement in a myriad of issues unrelated, or only remotely related, to alcoholism. Lacking singleness of purpose, the movement collapsed. The experience of the Washingtonians provides compelling evidence for the importance of AA focusing directly and exclusively

on the issue of alcoholism. My strong belief in the importance of the principle of singleness of purpose for the Fellowship of AA has some important consequences. It means that when I go to a meeting, I introduce myself as an alcoholic, period. Like many alcoholics (including Bill W – see page seven of the Big Book), my story includes drug use, ranging from pot to crack to LSD. I don't hesitate to share this at meetings when it is relevant, as it is part of the experience that brought me to AA, and a part of my story that many other young people, especially, can relate to. However, I think it is extremely important to emphasize that I am an alcoholic, and that in meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous we discuss the common solution to alcoholism that we share. If I'm an "alcoholic and an addict and you're an "alcoholic and a compulsive overeater and the person leading the meeting is an "alcoholic and a compulsive gambler we begin to lose our commonality. I become slightly different from you – an attitude that I believe is potentially fatal. Moreover, we've started down the slippery slope that doomed the Washingtonians.

Our program is no longer focused on the single purpose of recovery from alcoholism, but instead is tackling the issues of drug addiction, gambling, co-dependency, etc. – very serious problems, undoubtedly, but outside the scope of Alcoholics Anonymous. A careful reading of Traditions Five, Six, and Ten has convinced me of how dangerous this is to the continued existence of our Fellowship, and it is my responsibility as an AA member to ensure that the hand of Alcoholics Anonymous is always available in the future to reach out to the suffering alcoholic.

(continued on p. 6)

(con't)

I've found that the concept of singleness of purpose applies to my life in an even more immediate, personal way as well. When I got sober at twenty one, I didn't have an established career to return to, a family to reunite, or even all that much wreckage of the past to clean up. The future was a blank state, and the newly found freedom of sobriety made the possibilities overwhelming. I immediately jumped into school, work, and relationships – and suddenly didn't have time for meetings. Life would get chaotic and painful and I'd make my way back to the Fellowship and principles just long enough to soak up a little bit of serenity by osmosis, then head back out into the fray. Fortunately, some AA members were able to point out to me the insanity of my actions, and I was able to alter my behavior before it led

me to the inevitable drink.

I discovered that in order to maintain any semblance of spirituality and serenity in my life, I needed to live by the principle of singleness of purpose. Like the Fellowship as a whole, I have but one primary purpose: to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety. The same three reasons that support our group commitment to singleness of purpose underlie my personal commitment: (1) duty – I can repay those who have given me this gift by giving it away to others; (2) love – I've learned compassion for those still suffering and want to help others; and (3) self-preservation – I must help others in order to stay sober myself. I inevitably find that when I'm able to stay focused on my primary purpose, my "secondary purposes" (school, jobs, relationships) work themselves out

quite satisfactory. For me, the concept of singleness of purpose has become the bedrock of my personal program of recovery, just as it is the fundamental principle supporting the structure of our entire Fellowship.

<https://silkworth.net/alcoholics-anonymous/washingtonians-where-are-they-now-february-1995/>

"We believe, and so suggested a few years ago, that the action of alcohol on these chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy; that the phenomenon of craving is limited to this class and never occurs in the average temperate drinker. These allergic types can never safely use alcohol in any form at all; and once having formed the habit and found they cannot break it, once having lost their self confidence, their reliance upon things human, their problems pile up on them and become astonishingly difficult to solve." Alcoholics Anonymous, p. xxviii

How I Compiled Step Eight Honestly

The Big Book infers that we are to take stock honestly (p 64). My sponsor took this direction seriously with me because I had almost slipped after five months sober. I was informed that my mind was not always honest and that I must appeal God for help while writing my Step Eight inventory.

I was reminded that Bill Wilson wrote about the "...Great Reality deep down within us." (p 55). This would be my source to find the unvarnished truth, rather than my deceitful alcoholic thinking which led me to the bar room, year after year.

So, I prayed to God repeatedly—like a mantra. As I wrote, with God's help, there appeared ever so many memories of people I had harmed. These included having my name appearing in the local newspaper, over and

over, for public intoxication which had to embarrass my wonderful Christian parents. Also, my younger sister when she entered high school because of the dismal reputation I left behind. I went on a two-week drinking binge during my senior year!

Reviewing this process, I began to realize how dishonest with myself I had been through all those drunken years. It is easy to suppress unpleasant memories, thus avoiding the accompanying guilt. Of course, without guilt, nothing changes!

I will be forever grateful to my sponsor for his direction and Big Book knowledge on this step. We are told not to regret the past nor wish to shut the

door on it (p 83). I am still susceptible to guilt feelings to a certain degree, but not overwhelmingly. I have done what I can to make things right. Also, we are told about amends we cannot make: "We don't worry about them if we can honestly say we would right them if we could."



<https://www.aacle.org/how-i-compiled-step-eight-honestly/>

Restraint of Tongue and Pen

Restraint of tongue and pen is an expression commonly heard in the 12-step meetings I attend. It is a reference to a paragraph in the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*:

Nothing pays off like restraint of tongue and pen. We must avoid quick-tempered criticism and furious, power-driven arguments. The same goes for sulking or silent scorn. These are emotional booby traps baited with pride and vengefulness. Our first job is to sidestep the traps. When we are tempted by the bait, we should train ourselves to step back and think. For we can neither think nor act to good purpose until the habit of self-restraint has become automatic. -pg. 91, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*

To sum it up: Keep your thoughts to yourself, so you don't say something you will regret! The longer I continue the journey of recovery, the more important the concept of self-restraint becomes. Initially I thought of only applying it in what I would consider extreme situations: volatile, emotionally charged conversations that inevitably wind up with a lot of regrettable name-calling and cussing. Anyone can see the benefit of zipping the lips before saying something in the heat of the moment that you will later regret.

As time went on, I started to see additional benefits to practicing restraint of tongue and pen. The occasion that plays out the most frequently for me is the "debate disguised as a conversation." I'm sure everyone knows the type I mean. I have found that employing self-restraint in these situations has yielded benefits that I would have never foreseen: preventing an argument (which happens all too frequently in debate-style conversations), eliminating the inevitable drama and angst that are an all-too-frequent byproduct of debate-style conversations, and the peace that comes with the knowledge that it is not my job to convince you my opinion is the right one.

Of course, the just as frequent occasion that occurs: interactions with my children. Particularly in this season, when we are together 24/7, restraint of tongue is a skill I could perfect quite a bit more, but still, there has been progress. I like to explain my rationale for things; "because I said so" is not a style of parenting with which I'm comfortable (doesn't mean I won't occasionally use it, though, when all else fails!). My husband has long since pointed out that I tend to go overboard with my explanations, which then turn into debate-style conversations, which I've already discussed. But I am discovering, a little more slowly than I would like, that I can be true to myself and give the rationale for my decisions without indulging in the back and forth, unproductive conversations that always end in raised voices and slammed doors.

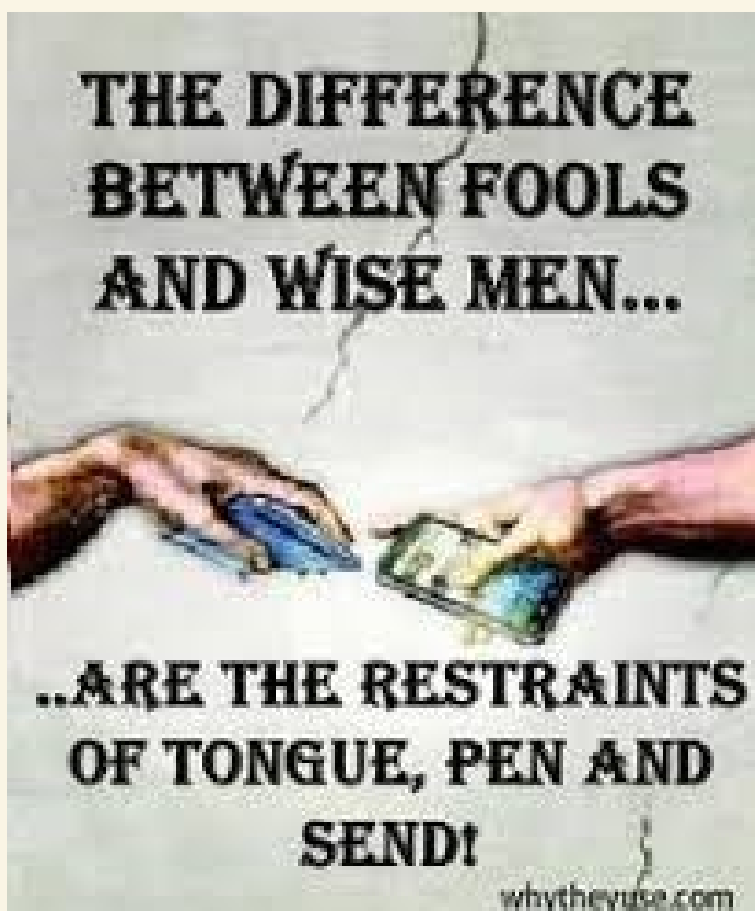
I have reaped untold rewards in applying this concept to my need for self-justification. In the past, if I have been questioned about anything, I have felt the urge to explain myself to the point of ridiculousness. This practice has benefitted not a single person: the person to whom I am self-justifying winds up exasperated, and I wind up frustrated. When I remember to practice self-restraint, I remember that if I am comfortable with a decision I made, then there is no need to justify anything to anyone, and what a relief that is!

Now and then I will get tripped up in this area, and I will have an occasion where I'm not sure if the right course of action

is to practice restraint, or to give voice to my feelings and needs. There is, and always will be, I suppose, work to be done in this arena. But I have learned that stopping myself from reacting to a situation *always pays off*. For example, I'm in a situation where I feel mistreated. Do I speak my mind and heart in a respectful way and voice my concerns, or do I practice restraint. The progress (never perfection) for me is that I **know** that speaking my heart in the heat of the moment never pays off. If it is important enough to share my concerns, it can wait until I am calm. More often than not, though, I find once I am calm that it winds being not important enough to discuss... which of course is the whole point of restraint of tongue and pen!

The best lesson of all that I have learned on this subject: I have never once regretted holding back my thoughts in an emotionally charged situation. I can always revisit a discussion, but I can never take back once the words have come out of my mouth.

<https://themiracleisaroundthecorner.wordpress.com/2014/07/17/restraint-of-tongue-and-pen/>



SMIA SERVICE TEAM:

Chair: Buddy F.
Vice Chair: Lorraine J.
Secretary: Kristi P.
Treasurer: Bruce O.
Parliamentarian: Paul S.
Web/Bookstall: Bill L.
Lifeline/Archives: Keith H.
Telephone: Melissa W.
Where & When: Pat P.

THEY ARE NOT AT FAULT

I am always listening to the different ways that members of the AA program

try to articulate their perception of their day-to-day problems and what causes them and what can be done about them. I experienced the same type of confusion in my early days and it has taken me a very long time to convince myself to trust the AA process and to be totally honest with myself about those issues and I can honestly say that they got it right when they suggested that we “thoroughly follow this path” and that is what I do, to the best of my understanding.

It was very hard to let down my egocentric guard in the beginning and even after many years in the program I still had to be very vigilant about my motives for every decision I made.

About twenty years ago, while listening to some members being critical of one of the newer members of the group, I heard this loud popping sound. That was my head coming out of my “you know what”. They were accusing him of the same things that I recognized in myself when I was new to the program, and it gave me a new respect for how I treat other people.

A friend of mine once said that “most forms of criticism and character assassination stem from low self-esteem”. Recognizing these things in myself, and not letting my EGO convince me that I’m superior to anyone has been the most profound leap in my spiritual development that I have experienced in all my years in AA.

They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. (BB p 58). If I want people to accept me, knowing that I am flawed myself, then how can I stand in judgment of anyone else simply because that person has not been as fortunate as I have and has not yet been able to let down his guard? Those critics also deserve my understanding as well for they are just displaying symptoms of alcoholism by being judgmental.

We have all been conditioned to defend our turf this way. I have learned that, if I want forgiveness for my flaws, then I will have to be accepting of those other people and have the strength to look beneath the surface and try to understand the things that trouble that person and replace my criticism with empathy and compassion.

As I practice this little exercise on everyone that seems to act outside of the norms of acceptable behavior, I remove one more of those little mental conflicts that used to keep me awake at night. If, when I was new in the program, I could have understood this simple principle and the peace of mind that has ensued as the result, I would have cut to the chase and never looked back, but it wasn’t that simple.

I had to unlearn all the faulty behaviors that I employed and replace them with unselfish, proven principles while my EGO fought me every step of the way. I’m happy to report that this approach has put my EGO in the back seat and my conscience rides right up front with me and I am looking forward to my next late sobriety revelation. <https://www.aacle.org/they-are-not-at-fault/>



Conscious Contact

10th and 11th Step Workshop From the Big Book and the 12 & 12

Hosted by Awakening of the Spirit AA Homegroup
Supported by West Central Intergroup

Saturday August 10, 2024: 6-8pm
Fellowship, Coffee, and Snacks Beginning at 5:30pm

NorthStar Community Church
5112 Pegasus Court, Suite E
Frederick, MD 21704

Bring your Big Book and 12 & 12

Child Care Will Be Provided

“Helping others takes the focus off of the individual. This is important because a lot of problems in the recovering A.A.’s life will be due to self absorption.”

<https://mendocinocoastaa.com/service-2/>

AUGUST 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4 Beth H., 21 yrs, Living Sober Jeanette W., 4 yrs, ODAAT Kevin M., 29 yrs @ Keeping It Green Paul M., 3 yrs, 12 & 12 For Serenity	5	6	7 Aaron S., 3 yrs, Grateful Alive	8	9	10 Nick S., 1 yr, Waldorf
11 James C., 5 yrs and Ray C., 3 yrs, Nev- er Too Late Bobby U., 33 yrs, Solo- mon's	12 Chuck M., 2 yrs, Harmo- ny	13	14	15	16	17 Michael O., 33 yrs, Satur- day AM Breakfast
18 Emme J., 21 yrs and Tay- lor T., 6 yrs, ODAAT Solomon's Group 40th Anniversary	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 Justin B., 4 yrs, Solo- mon's Suzie L., 19 yrs and Scott B., 2 yrs, Nev- er Too Late	26	27	28	29 Paul B., 35 yrs, Basic Text	30	31 Clair T., 51 yrs, King- ston Creek

SEPTEMBER 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Frank P., 5 yrs, Never Too Late	2	3	4	5 Tony S., 41 yrs, Almost Normal	6 J.J., 34 yrs, Awak- enings	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21 Kelly B., 11yrs, King- ston Creek
22	23	24	25	26 Pete D., 6 yrs, Pop- lar Hill	27	28
29	30					

shutterstock.com · 17579461841

"BLUE TOP @ NOON"

Lexington Park United Methodist Church

21760 Great Mills Road

12:00 noon

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

Tuesday will be the Daily Reflections

Wednesday will be the Big Book

Thursday will be a Step/Tradition meeting

Come check us out and join our group!



THE "WHAT'S THE POINT!"

A.A. MEETING

BIG BOOK
AS BILL SEES IT
GRAPEVINE
TWELVE
&
TWELVE



ALL MEETINGS
ARE
LITERATURE
BASED
EACH WEEK IS
DIFFERENT
A.A. APPROVED
LITERATURE

COME OUT AND CHECK US OUT

GOOD SAMARITAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

20850 LANGLEY RD. LEXINGTON PARK

THURSDAY EVENINGS 8:00 PM.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR HOME GROUP MEMBERS
WHOSE POSITIONS TO BE FILLED

COME OUT AND FIND OUT

WHAT'S THE POINT! OF LIVING

THE 12 STEPS OF RECOVERY

AND HOW WE DO THIS

"ONE DAY AT A TIME."

**SUPPORT YOUR
LOCAL GROUPS!**

CLEAN AIR GROUP

The Clean Air Group

Is in need of support

And home group members

Come on out and check us out

Friday nights 6:30pm.

St. Andrews Episcopal Church

44078 St. Andrews Church Rd.

NOT QUITE RIGHT

The Not Quite Right Group

8:00pm. Friday Nights

Good Samaritan Lutheran Church

20850 Langley Rd. (Middle Building)

Lexington Park, Md.

Is in need of Support

and Home Group Members



COFFEE, DONUTS,
AND FELLOWSHIP

Bring your sponsor

District 9 Workshop

Topics

The Three Indispensables

Willingness
Honesty
Open-mindedness

Prayer and Meditation

"Faith without works is dead"

It works - it really does.

Saturday

9am - 11 am

August 3rd, 2024

St. Benjamin's Lutheran
Church (700 Kriders
Cemetery Rd, Westminster,
MD 21158)

SUMMER PICNIC!!!

THE NORTH BEACH GROUP



FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP!!!

SATURDAY AUGUST 10, 2024

4:00 - 6:00

5912 Chesapeake Ave
North Beach, MD
20714

District 36

Game Night



AUG 24TH

6PM - 9PM

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
41605 FENWICK, ST.
LEONARDTOWN, MD



Please bring any games
you would like to play !!!

\$5 bowl
w/ fixins

d36.evntscmm@gmail.com

SIXTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL

Sessions by the Sea



OCEAN CITY MARYLAND
SEPTEMBER 3-8, 2024
ONLINE REGISTRATION ONLY!

SAVE THE DATES
Sept. 13 – 15, 2024

When it comes to Technology...
 We're going...

BACK TO THE FUTURE

For its 10th Anniversary,
 the NATIONAL A.A. TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP (NAATW)
 returns to where it all began:
St. Louis, Missouri

- Join us for a weekend of in-depth presentations, discussion and fellowship
- The call for presentations as well as in-person and online registration information is forthcoming
- Check our website - NAATW.org - for workshop info updates



AREA 29
CORRECTIONS CONFERENCE
DAY OF SHARING

LET IT BEGIN WITH ME

LUNCH~DOOR PRIZES~FELLOWSHIP THIS IS A FREE EVENT!

Saturday, October 12
United Methodist Church
731 Benfield Road
Severna Park, MD

8:00 - 9:00 AM Registration, Coffee, Doughnuts, Fellowship
 9:00 - 11:45 AM Panel Discussions
 11:45 - 1:00 PM Lunch & Fellowship (lunch is provided)
 3:15 - 5:00 PM Former Persons in Custody Panel

Questions? Contact Scott B. corrections@marylandaa.org

Correccionales Día de Compartir
sábado 12 de octubre de 2024

Iglesia Metodista Unida
731 Benfield Road, Severna Park, MD
Alcoholicos Anonimos
9am - 5pm


Algunos aspectos destacados:

8-9 AM Inscripción, Café, Donas
9-11:45 AM Paneles de discusión
11:45-1 PM Almuerzo proporcionado
3:45-5 PM Panel de ex personas bajo custodia



Almuerzo y Compañerismo
¡ESTE ES UN EVENTO GRATUITO!

contactar a
Scott at Corrections@MarylandAA.org

 District 10 presents

District 10
Unity Picnic

Burgers, Hot Dogs and Buns provided.
 Bring a drink, bring a chair, bring a dish to share.

Speaker Meeting at 2pm

10.20.24
SUNDAY
12-5 PM

Double Rock Park-
 Rich Pavillion
 8211 Glen Road, Parkville, MD 21274

Service Opportunities!

PI & CPC Area 29 Maryland

Teaming up to
Provide
Comprehensive
Service to A.A.



Cooperation with the Professional Community

MEMBERS OF C.P.C.
COMMITTEES INFORM
PROFESSIONALS AND
FUTURE PROFESSIONALS
ABOUT A.A.

JESSICA W., CPC CHAIR
CPC@MARYLANDAA.ORG

- Establishing better communication with professionals working with alcoholics.
- Finding simple, effective ways of cooperating without affiliating.
- Explaining clearly what A.A. does and doesn't do.

Public Information

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC
INFORMATION
COMMITTEES CONVEY A.A.
INFORMATION TO THE
GENERAL PUBLIC

KATHI H., PI CHAIR
PI@MARYLANDAA.ORG

- Giving presentations about A.A. to schools and organizations.
- Providing information about A.A. through digital and print materials.
- Ensuring local media have accurate information about A.A. through PSA's, anonymity protected interviews, and press kits.

Join us at 3 p.m.
on the 3rd
Sunday of the
month

ID: 854
5914 3395

Pw: 199887

District Chairs
and Interested
AA members
are invited!

CONTACT: A29CPCPI@GMAIL.COM



Maryland Deaf Access
Committee (MDAC)
Alcoholics Anonymous
Visit our Website!
<http://mdacAA.org>

We organize the funding
and scheduling of in-
person / hybrid
AA meetings
interpreted in American
Sign Language (ASL)

PayPal QR code >>>



✓ We follow all of
AA's 12 Traditions

✓ We rely on contributions
from only AA members
& AA entities

✓ We provide language
Access via ASL
interpretation

✓ Our focus is to make AA
accessible to the Deaf and
Hard of Hearing

Contributions accepted via PayPal@
MarylandDeafAccess@gmail.com

Grapevine Meeting!

4th Tuesday of each month 6:30 pm

Did you know that The Area 29 Grapevine Committee is a traveling literature store? We have a large variety of AA Grapevine books for sale. Please reach back out if your group, District, or intergroup is hosting an event or workshop and would like us to come and sell literature.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85217774704>

pwd=TVhEdFpKdmxSRINvNnJHU1pY
WDVaQT09

Meeting ID: 852 1777 4704 Passcode: 019347

Brandi D., Area 29 Grapevine Committee Chair

For more info: grapevine@marylandaa.org

Group and District GVR's encouraged to attend, all
are welcome!

Are you looking for a fun service position?

Please join us and find out more! All are welcome to
attend!

Area 29 Accessibilities Committee MONTHLY MEETING

Join us @ 3pm on the
2nd Sunday of the
Month

Zoom ID:
848 0308 9697
Password: Area29

The Area 29 Accessibilities Committee explores, develops, and
offers resources to alcoholics with significant barriers to receiving
the AA message and to participating in our program of recovery.

Scan the Code!
Take the Accessibilities
Survey



District or Intergroup
Chairs and all
Interested AA Members
are invited!

For more information email the
Accessibilities Chair at
Accessibility@marylandaa.org

SMIA Meeting Minutes 7/13/24

Opening: Buddy F. opened meeting with the Serenity Prayer.

Board Members Present: Buddy F. – Chair, Lorraine J. - Vice-Chair, Paul S. – Parliamentarian and Kristi P. – Secretary

New Member(s): Brandy T. – Joan B., Poplar Hill **District 36 Rep Groups & Committees**

Represented: Bill L.–Harmony Group/Web/Bookstall, Keith H.- SMIA Lifeline Chair, Lorraine J. – Bedouin , Nathan H. – Waldorf , Zuriel S. – Sunday Morning Sobriety, Francis R. – KISS Group, Andy X. – Keeping it Green

SMIA Chair Report: Buddy F. reported he attended the Area 29 Intergroup Liaison Zoom Meeting on July 1st . There were 9 people in attendance. At the meeting, Terry reported the 90th year anniversary of AA conference is coming up and will be held in Vancouver. Theme will be “Language of the Heart”. Registration forms will be going out in August and registration and booking of rooms will begin in September. Expecting up to 50,000 people. Be mindful about things you may have to do to gain entry into Canada. Information can be obtained at aa.org. Buddy also reported personal income contributions have been raised from \$5,000 to \$7,500. Suggestions for CARCs are requested for subjects for board to discuss to take to World Services. CARC meeting will be held on July 29th in Calvert County, location TBD. World Services received 165,000 emails, 1,700 phone calls, 1,500 translation requests and 1,470 visited the World Services in New York. Grapevine podcast available in 60 different countries. 800,000 downloads as of April. YouTube has a channel with sign language capability available. Reviewing a new pamphlet for Asian Americans. Also, updated African American pamphlet.

Vice-Chair Report: no report.

Secretary Report: Kristi P. read the SMIA

June 2024 meeting minutes. A motion was made, seconded and passed.

Treasurer Report: Buddy F. gave the June 2024 Treasurer's report on Bruce's behalf. A motion was made to accept the Treasurer's report. A motion was seconded and passed.

Committee Reports

Bookstall Report: Bill L. reported all literature prices have increased to reflect the increase from World Services. There were 445 visits to the On-Line Bookstall since the May meeting. There were 10 orders since the last meeting, all of which are complete for a total of \$262. Chips and Medallions were purchased from the Token Shop for \$204.00.

Web/Technology: Total visitors 4,135. Most frequently visited pages: Home Page, Where and When Calendar, Announcements, Anniversary Calendar, On-line Meetings and Announcements. No site updates and changes.

Meeting Change: The address for all meetings at Peace Lutheran Church has changed to 301 Smallwood Drive. Currently there are 127 meetings in our service area; 120 meetings are in-person, 6 meetings are hybrid, 6 meetings are on-line only, and 1 meeting is reported as suspended but has an on-line presence. Document Posts and Updates: Where and When PDF updated 6/7/24; Lifeline posted 7/1/24; Finance Page updated 7/1/24; Minutes posted 6/26/24, FY 2024/2025 Budget posted on 7/1. To be reposted when approved.

Gratitude Dinner: Dinner will be November 16th . Looking for chair and volunteers.

Corrections and Treatment: Calvert – Lorraine reported that Riley F. is doing a fantastic job with Avenues. Charles – Zee S. reported no significant changes. St. Mary's – Buddy F. reported the Monday night 6 p.m. meeting at Compass looking for volunteers to take meetings in. Kim got a notice that the jail is going to be opening back up soon.

Lifeline/Archives: Keith H. reported everything is going well. Keith thanks everyone for their contributions to the Lifeline.

Picnic: Buddy F. reported the picnic went very well. Picnic fee was \$425 originally. SMIA received an additional \$50 bill.

\$730.40 in expenses for food, etc. Water, ice and sodas were donated. Total cost for picnic was \$1,205.40. Budget was

\$1,000. A motion was made to pay the overage, motion was seconded and passed

PI/CPC: Calvert – Lorraine J. reported that Kenny G. is doing a great job. Charles – no report. Buddy F. Reported the Charles County Health Dept. reached out for Where and When's. St. Mary's –Buddy F. reported that Sandy C. is the new chair.

Telephone: Buddy F. reported on Melissa's behalf. From 5/11-6/8, there were 19 calls, total duration 35 minutes. St. Mary's – 2 calls, Calvert – 3 calls, Charles - 9 calls, 5 calls not identified. From 6/9 – 6/13, there were 34 calls, total duration 2 hours, 13 minutes. St. Mary's – 9 calls, Charles – 12 calls, Calvert – 6 calls, 7 calls not identified. You can visit our website to add your name to list to receive calls.

Serenity Breakfast: Buddy F. reported there was a \$128 outstanding bill for the main cook payment was made. Buddy will provide the Treasurer with the receipts.

Where and When: Buddy reported we currently have 3 boxes of Where and When's left.

Workshops: Buddy F. reported that Pat S. requested any ideas/topics for workshops. Pat has reached out to the speaker from Akron as a possibility.

Old Business: A motion was made to approve the FY 2024/2025 budget, seconded and passed.

New Business: None

For the Good of the Order: Solomon's Group celebrating 40th Anniversary on August 18th . Food and festivities at 5 pm and meeting at 7pm. Sessions by the Sea will be 9/3-9/8, online registration only. Meeting adjourned with the Responsibility Pledge and the Lord's Prayer.

August 2024

Southern Maryland Intergroup Association Inc Treasury Report

Monthly Contributions:

\$350.00

www.somdintergroup.org/contribute

SMIA, PO Box 767, Charlotte Hall, MD 20622

Southern Maryland Intergroup Association Inc Statement of Financial Position June 25, 2024 - July 24, 2024

Assets

Primary Business Checking	\$ 6,474.31
Primary Business Savings	\$ 3,001.19
Prudent Reserve	\$ 3,300.00
PayPal	\$ 164.84
Bookstall Cash on hand	\$ 100.00

Total Assets 13,040.34

Expenses

Bookstall Purchases	\$ (705.04)
Liability Insurance	\$ -
Lifeline Printing	\$ -
Misc	\$ -
Phone Answering Service/1-800#	\$ (28.68)
Post Office Box	\$ -
Rent	\$ (150.00)
Webmaster	\$ -
Website	\$ (115.75)
Where & When	\$ -
Picnic	\$ (1,205.40)
Travel	\$ -
Workshops	\$ -
SMIA Archives	\$ -
Office sup (coffee, postage & faxing)	\$ -
Bank Charges and Fees	\$ -
Other - Tax Filings	\$ -

Total Expenses (\$999.47)

Southern Maryland Intergroup Association Inc Yearly Statement of Activity May 1, 2024 - Apr 30, 2025

Revenue

Contributions	\$ 956.03
Bookstall	\$ 1,210.00
Gratitude Dinner	\$ -
Serenity Breakfast	\$ 1,385.00

Total Revenue 3,551.03

Expenses

Bookstall Purchases	\$ (1,635.02)
Liability Insurance	\$ -
Lifeline Printing	\$ (132.45)
Misc	\$ -
Phone Answering Service/1-800#	\$ (85.94)
Post Office Box	\$ (120.00)
Rent	\$ (450.00)
Webmaster	\$ -
Website	\$ (209.56)
Where & When	\$ -
Picnic	\$ (1,205.40)
Travel	\$ (131.32)
Workshops	\$ -
SMIA Archives	\$ -
Office sup (coffee, postage & faxing)	\$ (24.99)
Bank Charges and Fees	\$ -
Other - Tax Filings	\$ -

Total Expenses (\$2,632.97)

Annual Net Assets 918.06

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
DONATIONS:**

Poplar Hill
Early Risers

Kingston Creek
Saturday Morning Beginners

WHERE DO WE SEND OUR CONTRIBUTIONS?

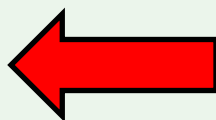
1) All contributions can be made online:

www.somdintergroup.org/donate.php

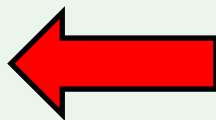
2) Or they can be mailed to the appropriate office location:

PLEASE NOTE THAT GSO AND MARYLAND GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE ADDRESSES HAVE CHANGED

**General Service Office
Post Office Box 2407
James A Farley Station
New York, NY 10116-2407**



**Maryland General Service
PO BOX 1834
Frederick, MD 21702**



**Southern Maryland Intergroup (SMIA)
P.O. Box 767
Charlotte Hall, MD 20622**

**District 1 Trust Fund (Calvert)
P.O. Box 234
Barstow, MD 20610**

**District 35 (Charles)
P.O. Box 1981
La Plata, MD 20646**

**District 36 (St. Mary's)
P.O. Box 1334
California, MD 20619**

ATTENTION GROUP TREASURERS:

***Remember to include the 6-digit GSO Group Number on all correspondence to Maryland General Service.**

Samples of Group Contributions to A.A. Service Entities*

Distribution Plan of _____
(YOUR GROUP NAME)

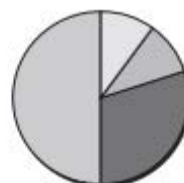
Your Group Service # _____

(Be sure to write group name and service # on all contributions.)



____% to district
____% to area committee
____% to G.S.O.
____% to intergroup or central office
____% other A.A. service entities
____% other A.A. service entities

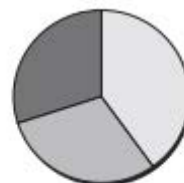
OR



10% to district
10% to area committee
30% to G.S.O.
50% to intergroup or central office

OR

If you have no intergroup/central office.



40% to district
30% to area
30% to G.S.O.



**THE DEADLINE FOR ALL
LIFELINE MATERIALS IS
THE 27th OF EACH
MONTH.**

DISTRICT 35 - CHARLES CO.

***Please come out and join us
at our next District Meeting -
the first Thursday of the
month @ 7pm***

**Peace Lutheran Church
11610 Rubina Place
Waldorf MD 20602**

**Mailing address:
PO Box 1981, La Plata,
MD 20646**

***SERVICE KEEPS US
SOBER***

NEW BOOKSTALL HOURS:

First and Third Thursday of the
month 6:00pm - 6:45pm
Second Saturday of the month 9am - 10am

DISTRICT 1 CALVERT COUNTY

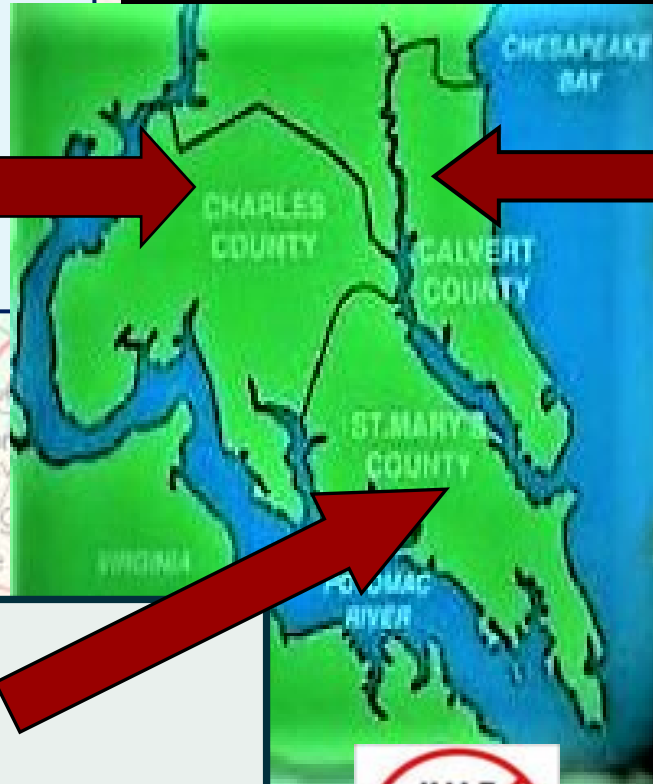
SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Grapevine Rep

Accessibility Chair

**District Meeting:
7 PM, 3rd Monday
St. Paul's Episc.
Church**

**Prince Frederick, MD
District 1 Trust Fund
PO Box 234
Barstow, MD 20610
www.calvertaa.org**



DISTRICT 36

ST. MARY'S COUNTY

PO Box 1334, California, MD 20619

www.district36mdaa.com



DISTRICT NOTES

**Please send any up-
dates for the Where &
When to:**

**[smia.whereandwhen@
somdaa.org](mailto:smia.whereandwhen@somdaa.org)**

**Current meeting guides
are available at the
monthly SMIA meeting
on a limited basis.**

The next SMIA Meeting will be held on

Saturday, September 14 at 10:00 AM

Join us in person @

**Immaculate Conception Church,
28297 Old Village Road, Mechanicsville, MD
20659**

Or via Zoom @

**[https://zoom.us/j/99982597908?
pwd=QzVLcUZrVHdacFlrYUNZN21tdkluQT09](https://zoom.us/j/99982597908?pwd=QzVLcUZrVHdacFlrYUNZN21tdkluQT09)**