

First Things First

Newsletter of the Western Maryland Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous

Today I'm grateful for...

- life sober, sponsorship, health, family – so much!
– Mary Ann G., Sunday Serenity, Cumberland
- living another day.
–Dave O., New Hope, Cumberland
- my daughter and being able to be a full-time Dad to her!
–Sean M., Oakland Liberty Club
- a loving and forgiving God.
–Rob P., H.O.W., Cumberland
- I woke up today.
–Smitty, ODAAT, Altoona, Pa.
- family, love.
–Kelly W., Berkeley Springs A.A.
- God, another sober day, and A.A. as a whole.
–Mandie M., Lake Group
- roses planted in sobriety.
–Sarah B., Oakland Liberty Club
- being vertical.
–Chap, Frostburg



Thanks for showing up!

A.A. members and friends came to Cumberland from across the tri-state area last month to celebrate sobriety and togetherness and good old-fashioned breakfast food.

Almost 130 people filled tables at the Cumberland Country Club April 22 for the 31st annual Gratitude Breakfast, sponsored by the Western Maryland Intergroup.

They came from Hagerstown and Hancock, Baltimore and Berkeley Springs, W. Va., Oakland and Altoona, Pa.

continued on page 2

Today I'm grateful for...

–sobriety, great friends, good health.

–April R., Oakland Liberty Club

–sobriety and God.

–Barry W., Hagerstown

–life, love, A.A., agape, and coffee!!

–Mary Carol R., Baltimore

–the ability to get up and out to fully enjoy the weekend.

–Vince C., Hancock

–my God and my family and my sobriety.

–Andre L., Fort Cumberland

–all the people around me who have helped me during my recovery. May God bless them.

–Ralph M., Friendsville

–my family, love, peace, laughter.

–Doug P., Berkeley Springs, W. Va.

–the gift of the Fellowship.

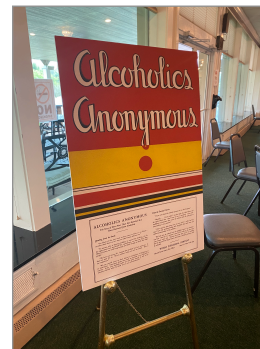
–Dan S., Smitty's, Frostburg

–my husband and grandson. And that I woke up this morning.

–Talisa E., Fellowship Hall, Hagerstown

–the New Way of Life.

–Bill G., New Way of Life, Oakland Liberty Club



Everybody brought a little gratitude.

Around 75 attendees filled out gratitude slips, responding to the prompt, “Today I’m grateful for...”

“Being free from intoxicants,” wrote John W., of Frostburg, who instigated the production of four beautiful banners to make this year’s event special.

“Birds singing, new flowers in spring.”

After a buffet breakfast of scrambled eggs,

bacon, biscuits, hash browns, and fresh fruit, Russell J. drew two gratitude slips from a hat. Winners received the books, *Fun in Sobriety*, and *Spiritual Awakenings*, published by A.A. Grapevine.

Russell J. didn’t win, but he was grateful, anyway...for “life clean and sober, family, and A.A. and N.A. family.”

Speaker Ryan B. of Baltimore missed his son’s first T-ball game to travel to Cumberland and share his experience, strength and hope. Sobriety and recovery have helped him learn how to have healthier relationships, Ryan said. He’s become a more responsible employee, a better friend, and now a husband and father – all gifts of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Gratitude Breakfast, founded here by the late Jon B., always includes a “sobriety countdown,” with the culmination being recognition of those with a day or two of sobriety. Two men received a standing ovation for achieving three days of sobriety.

The morning, though overcast and rainy, ended with a dove release, courtesy of Mike R.

See some of the gratitudes submitted by breakfast attendees on pages 1-4.

Today I'm grateful for...

–the gorgeous scenery around me and the kind souls around me.

–Alice W.

–waking up this morning and having my God.

–Nathaniel M., Friendship Haven

–the life sobriety has given me!

–Greg S., New Hope Group, Cumberland

–a new start and a new home group – a day at a time.

–Fred B., New Life Group, Cumberland

–that I am alive and sober and well with no medical issues today.

–Woody W., Friendsville Step Study

–my independence!

–Sue L., Oakland Liberty Club

–the grace of a Higher Power who lifted my life from despair to transformation.

–Kim S., Came to Believe Group

–to have a relationship with my children.

–Deann M., Hagerstown Group

–living life abundantly.

–Marcus Y., Oakland

Does your group need Where & Whens? Let us know at westernmarylandaa@gmail.com.

Registration is open! Go to:
<http://www.marylandaa.org/state-convention>

Today I'm grateful for...

–all the support from my family and Al-Anon friends that have helped me be proud of my life.

–Samantha W., *New Beginnings*

–my sponsor and grand-sponsor and having a choice not to drink today.

–Nathan F., *Stick with the Winners, Keyser, W. Va.*

–that the hand of A.A. is here for me.

–Brandon D., *St. Mark's, Berkeley Springs, W. Va.*

–the life the program has given me.

–Kevin K., *Hagerstown*

–God's grace, great people.

–Stevie Jean E., *Oakland Liberty Club*

–the attendance here is back to where it was in other times.

–Shirley C., *Sisters in Sobriety, Cumberland*

–being able to come to this breakfast. "Thank you, Paul."

–Thor S., *St. Mark's, Hancock*

–the fellowship of the A.A. Gratitude Breakfast; waking sober.

–Liz J., *H.O.W. Group, Cumberland*

–my first annual Breakfast.

–Joe Lewis, *Sick and Tire Group, Frostburg*





Happy Destiny DAY Retreat
 Saturday, May 20, 2023 • 1:00-9:30 pm
 Pilgrim Hills Park
 1618 East Randolph Rd
 Colesville, MD 20904

<https://montgomeryparks.org/parks-and-trails/pilgrim-hills-forest-park/>
PARKING IS LIMITED. Ample Parking Across the Street at Valley Mill Park - Please Consider Carpooling

Service Opportunities Available
REGISTER EARLY
Space is Limited!

\$50 Registration Fee Includes:

- Beverages, Snacks, and Dinner
- Activities and Workshops (Details are on our website)
- Sober Fellowship
- Open AA Meeting
- Al-Anon Participation
- T-Shirt - Tie Dye is back by popular demand

Register Online OR Mail Form Below
 To register and pay Online (Small Service Fee) visit www.happydestinyretreat.org

One Registrant's Name and Information Per Form

Name: _____ **If Mailing:** _____
Address: _____ **Make Check Payable to:** _____
Phone number: _____ **Happy Destiny Retreat**
Email address: _____ **And Mail This Form To:** _____
 Michael Krieg
 13014 Turkey Branch Pkwy
 Rockville MD 20853

T-Shirt Size: S M L XL XXL XXXL
T-Shirt Style: Men's Women's

Dietary Preferences - Check All That Apply*
 Gluten-Free Vegetarian Vegan

For more information:
Web: www.happydestinyretreat.org
Email: happydestinyretreat@gmail.com

No Pets Allowed • Must Register in Advance • Only Registered Participants May Attend

*While we strive to accommodate a variety of food preferences, if you have allergies, or a specialized diet, you are welcome to bring your own food in a cooler. We do not have storage space. Please contact us if you have any questions.




Hagerstown Area Intergroup
"Round Robin"
Potluck Spring Luncheon
 Saturday, May 6, 2023
 11:00 am to 2:00 pm
 Otterbein United Methodist Church
 108 East Franklin Street
 Hagerstown, MD 21740

Speaker: Dean B. from Parkville, MD

Please bring your favorite dish or dessert to share!
 Chicken and beverages will be provided.

★ Speaker ★ 50/50 Raffle ★ Door Prizes
 ★ Food ★ Fellowship ★ Fun

GRATITUDE BREAKFAST



Come celebrate the miracle of AA with food, Fellowship with Jerry W. from North Carolina
 May 21, 2023
 Elk's Lodge - 289 Willowdale Drive, Frederick, MD 21702

8:30-9 AM - Coffee & Fellowship
 9-10 AM - Breakfast Buffet
 10-10:30 AM - Sobriety countdown, readings, 50/50 raffles & announcements
 10:30-11:30 AM - Jerry W. shares experience strength & hope

Tickets \$20.00 - Email activities@westcentralaa.org OR (EVENT BRITE LINK)
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2023-gratitude-breakfast-tickets-529927927697>
 TICKETS AVAILABLE ON EVENTBRITE

What is the Western Maryland Intergroup?

The primary purpose of the Western Maryland Intergroup is to assist the Alcoholics Anonymous groups of Allegany and Garrett counties, and Ridgeley, W. Va., carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic. As a courtesy, our Where-n-Whens include meetings in Salisbury, Pa., and various locations in West Virginia. Western Maryland Intergroup is responsible for the phone lines, the Where-n-When and newsletter publications, institutional 12th-step work, the website, the annual Gratitude Breakfast, and more, so that A.A. members and their families can hear the message of recovery.



Join us, won't you?

Every A.A. group in the area can elect a representative to Intergroup. Intergroup representatives attend monthly meetings, contributing ideas and skills, and help to form the collective group conscience for A.A. in the area.

Meetings are at **6 p.m.** the third Friday of each month at various locations in Allegany and Garrett counties. **The next meeting is Friday, May 19.** at The Oakland Liberty Club, 125 E. Liberty St., Oakland, Md.

First Things First is published monthly by the Western Maryland Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous.

P.O. Box 403, Cumberland, MD 21501-0403

Website: <https://westernmarylandaa.org>

Email: westernmarylandaa@gmail.com

24-hour Hotline: 844-568-3422, or 844-LOVE4AA

Submissions are welcome! If you have an idea or a story, send us an e-mail.

The views expressed in *First Things First* represent those of individuals and do not imply endorsement by Alcoholics Anonymous.



What happened at the meeting?

Western Maryland Intergroup, April 21, 2023 meeting minutes

Attendance

Woody, Cody, Kristin B, Lora, Les, Farren, Kenny, JC, Hayes, Erin

Call to Order at 6:07 Adjourned at 7:10 pm

Serenity Prayer

Traditions

Open with JC showing beautiful artwork for the Gratitude Breakfast March 17, 2023 minutes approved

Chair: Cody B.

Co-Chair: Les W.

Secretary: Lora B.

Treasurer: Farren S.

Where & When

Ed sent the template for PDF. Kristin printed 300 copies and folded them. How to hand them out? Bring to GB and give to groups.

Literature

Les has been unable to locate the book that he uses to order pamphlets.

Treasurer

Starting balance	+1993.09
April paper statement fee	-1.00
Friendsville Step donation	+42.50
Ending balance	+2035.59

Issue with our PO Box even though we renewed and reapplied for our old PO Box. Farren is taking care of it.

Hotline

Everything is running fine. We've had two calls so far this month.

Old Business

Gratitude breakfast

Gratitude breakfast is tomorrow. Les is MC. A paper will be upfront for Les to keep track of activities. Kristin will have Gratitude slips for people to add their gratitude. A drawing will happen where two gratitudes are selected from a hat and given a book each.

Institutions

Doing great with speakers for Massie and halfway house.

Lora and Cody are still going to the jail.

Kristin has the home group database form for the GB. Discussion ensued about what is a GSR. Should we start a movement to elect more GSRs in Area 17? Not yet. Erin volunteered to be GSR to Intergroup. Kristin's going to ask contacts in State GSR if sending a GSR from Intergroup to the State is a violation of traditions.

Activities

Newsletter

Kristin B. is asking for input/feedback. Printed 60 copies of the newsletter for GB at the front table. Lora was voluntold to do the slogan article for May. Kristin asked if we should have an email newsletter notification that people can sign up for.

Kenny said the meetings in this area are not following the traditions. Talk about oldtimers dying and leaving a void. Les thinks we should bring up the topic of GSR. Educate people about GSR in newsletter and other places. Get out a strong message. Discuss GSR issue at a later meeting.

Website

Kristin T is updating the website. To dos: 1) Add a link to change your meeting time and date. 2) Add a link to send more Where and When handouts.

Conclusion: Add physical address to database form. Format it to be more clear.

CPC

Woody gave a stack of where & when handouts to AHEC. Gave some to Dr. Hartsock. Will ask Oakland if they've run out.

New business

Our next meeting will be May 19, 2023 at The Oakland Liberty Club, 125 E. Liberty St., Oakland, Md.

Conference report-back set for May 20

The 73rd General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous ended April 29, and Area 29 Delegate Kurt W. plans to give a complete “report back” during an Assembly meeting on Saturday, May 20, in Severna Park, Md.

The business meeting starts at 9 a.m. and goes until 3 p.m. at Severna Park United Methodist Church, 731 Benfield Road, Severna Park. All GSRs should attend in person or virtually. Zoom meeting ID is 873 0539 6886; Passcode: 077854.

Ninety-three delegates from across the U.S. and Canada attended the annual conference in New York City April 23-29 to share the group consciences of their A.A. groups and guide the Fellowship in the coming year.

Kurt W. shared a short message on April 30th with Area 29 Maryland General Service, Inc.:

Hello Members of Area 29,

The 73rd General Service Conference is now complete, and I am now home. This was a very different conference than last year, and a very different conference experience for me. I am grateful you all gave me the opportunity to participate.

I plan to spend the day in quiet reflection and meditation, unpacking my suitcases and looking though the mementos I was able to bring home. They are a reminder of the new friends I met from throughout the US and Canada, friendships renewed from last year, and how I had the opportunity to learn from them all. Here in Area 29 we are but a small part of a larger whole, and many of our Areas are very different both in geography and culture.

Tomorrow I will begin working on my Report-Back presentation. I am looking forward to sharing it with you all at our Assembly on May 20th in beautiful Severna Park. I hope you all can attend.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve our fellowship,

**Kurt W., Delegate, Area 29, Panel 72
Chair, Conference Corrections Committee**

**Area 29 Accessibilities
Invites you to a
presentation on:**

**Creating a
Deaf Access
Committee**

**ALCOHOLICS
ANONYMOUS**

**ID: 841 2499
3206
PW: 326186**

**ASL INTERPRETED
*ADVANCE NOTICE REQUIRED
FOR SPANISH
INTERPRETATION
CONTACT:**

Accessibilities@MarylandAA.org

NORTHEAST REGIONAL FORUM

June 2-4, 2023
Boston Marriott Burlington, Burlington, MA

You are invited to the Northeast Regional Forum!

PURPOSE OF REGIONAL FORUMS

- ▶ Regional Forums are hosted by the A.A. General Service Board and “open” to all A.A. members or to anyone interested in A.A.
- ▶ Regional Forums are designed to enhance communication and participation between A.A. members, the General Service Board and staff and directors from the General Service Office and AA Grapevine.

PROGRAM

- ▶ Your Northeast Regional Trustee will moderate the event. You will also hear from General Service Office Staff Members, the General Manager, General Service Board Trustees, AA Grapevine Inc. Publisher and Staff, A.A. World Services, Inc. Director, your region’s Delegates, and past trustees.
- ▶ There will be presentations, workshops, panels, and more. There will also be sharing sessions that will allow you to comment and ask questions of the board and staff. A sample program is posted on aa.org under the Regional Forums tab.
- ▶ The event will take place on Friday from 6 p.m. – 10 p.m., Saturday from 9 a.m. – 9 p.m., and Sunday from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

- ▶ Registration is **FREE** and will open online at www.aa.org on March 6, 2023.
- ▶ All registration information is confidential and will not be used for anything except communicating about the event and sending the digital Final Report.

HOTEL INFORMATION

Boston Marriott Burlington
1 Burlington Mall Road, Burlington, MA, 01803
Phone: (888) 238-2427

- ▶ Hotel reservations: <https://www.marriott.com/events/start.mi?id=1656440251662&key=GRP>

Last day to book May 15th

- ▶ Rate: Double Occupancy, \$159 per night US or Canadian
 - To receive the group rate, reference the event.

We look forward to seeing you in Boston!

For more information, please contact, Regional Forums Staff Coordinator,
at regionalforums@aa.org or call (212) 870-3120

May anniversaries

- Anne T., 5/18/2005
- Marge P., H.O.W. Group, 5/5/2013
- Jess M., 5/20/2013
- Luke G., 5/12/2014
- Tony C., Fort Cumberland Group, 5/28/2013
- Chip B., 5/18/2009
- Charlotte G., 5/15/2006
- Joel E., Frostburg Serenity Group, 5/27/1985
- Marcario G., Ridgeley Renegades, 5/18/2018
- Tina B., Frostburg Serenity Group, 5/21/2001
- Randall M., Sunday Night Step Group, 5/8/2017
- Darrel D., New Way of Life Group, 5/5/2018
- Frank V., Easier Softer Way Group, 5/2/1992
- Mary Y., Sunday Night Step Group, 5/12/2018
- Bill G., New Way of Life Group, 5/25/1990



“The wisdom of A.A. is so deep that it confines its own part in our personal recovery to nothing more than suggestion. A.A. leaves it entirely up to you and to me to decide, not only whether to use this program, but also how to use it.”

—Newhall, California, June 1975, “Simple Truths in an Intellectual Age,” *Beginners’ Book*

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To include your anniversary in *First Things First*, email westernmarylandaa@gmail.com, or enter your information on the website, www.westernmarylandaa.org.