

District 28 Meeting Minutes

December 2020 / Page 1 of 3
DRAFT

Date: December 16, 2020

Attendance—Virtual Meeting:

Officers (2): DCM, Secretary

GSR or Alt GSR (4): Bel Air Big Book, Bel Air Women's Big Book (GSR and Alt both in attendance), Bel Air Women's Group, Never Too Early

Other (1): Area 29 Treatment Committee Chair; Emmorton Group (non-GSR counted as secretary), Good News Group (non-GSR counted as DCM)

The meeting began at 7:00 p.m. with the Serenity Prayer.

Secretary's report / previous month's minutes:

- **November minutes:** Motion to accept. Second. None opposed. Motion carries.

Bridging the Gap presentation: Frank M., Area 29 Treatment Committee Chair, presented the current state of Bridging the Gap in Area 29. He is visiting with the Intergroups and Districts in Area 29 to gather shared experience.

- The program has been around in several iterations and is now on life support because of the pandemic.
- The program is an Agenda item for the 2021 General Service Conference.
- The General Service Office is evaluating the program—looking at the shared experience of U.S. and Canada.
- GSO has discovered the program is not working; in some Areas it is incredibly complicated. The frustrations in Area 29 arise because it is 12 Step work—it shouldn't be as complicated as the Area has made it.
- This is what the Treatment Committee has been working on: trying to simplify the process.
- Frank shared the Baltimore Intergroup's model. The program is run through the Intergroup and is an additional sign-up option on their 12 Step call list: individuals can sign up as 12 Step contacts, Bridging the Gap temporary contacts; or both. When a request comes to the Intergroup, the office can simply use the available list of temporary contacts. Also, Baltimore is having the temporary contact initiate contact rather than the newcomer. Frank also shared Baltimore Intergroup's FAQ/how-to comparison sheet that explains their 12 Step list compared to Bridging the Gap—it simplifies the program as to what Bridging the Gap is all about
- District 28 shared their experience with the program. Summarized responses are as follows:
 - Like the idea of a simplified volunteer signup form.
 - For District and the Northeast Maryland Intergroup area, it's kind of a duplicate service to the 24/7 answering service. Anyone who comes here and wants help can pick up the phone and talk to a human.
 - The Northeast Maryland Intergroup already serves all the local institutions (hospitals and institutions), so anyone coming out of there has had direct contact with local AAs. Could blend BTG into that effort.
 - One GSR noted that the Baltimore model eliminates the need for a regional coordinator. It just gets blended into the Intergroup H&I.
 - One GSR shared experience of having had a dozen plus Bridging the Gap assignments over the years and having only connected with one actual person.

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District 28 Meeting Minutes

December 2020 / Page 2 of 3
DRAFT

- One attendee likes the idea of having the individual make first contact, but it hasn't worked. Baltimore Intergroup's experiences is that having the temporary contact initiate contact is working better.
- Two GSRs shared that they like the idea of the temporary contact initiating the first call. As one stated, "likes the idea of a sober individual talking the initiative to make contact versus making the new person make the decision."
- A GSR asked about having or making a pamphlet to give to groups. Frank shared the BTG pamphlet on AA.org and also suggested going to AA.org and watching the video called *Hope*—this video gets shown at treatment facilities and explains the program as well.

There will be an Area-wide meeting about Bridging the Gap on January 6, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. Information is on marylandaa.org and the DCM should have the information as well. Frank invited all to attend.

The next steps in the process are for Frank to sending the shared-experience information to the GSO. Frank also noted that GSO is working on a Bridging the Gap workbook and service materials.

GSR reports:

- **Bel Air Big Book:** Nothing new to report. Meeting continues to be virtual. Seem to have 19 people every week. Has been fun getting people from out of town to speak.
- **Never too early:** Still doing hybrid (in person and virtual) meeting; those in person using masks etc. The group was attempting to get into a church rather than the current in-person location, but recent COVID developments ended that possibility for now.
- **Bel Air Women's Big Book:** Meeting is virtual. Will have another group conscience at end of January to revisit that practice. The group is meeting Christmas Eve day. Attendance is 20-25 women; occasionally a newcomer. The group hands out virtual chips, and those interested in sponsoring can put contact info in the chat.
- **Bel Air Women's Group:** Meeting virtually only. Ask for people who want to be a sponsor to provide name and contact info in the chat. Had 25 at the last virtual meeting. Nothing much has changed; will continue this way for a while. No scheduled group conscience meetings to discuss changing current practices.
- **Emmorton Group:** No active GSR; nothing to report. Not meeting and unknown when the group will return to meeting.
- **Good News:** Discussion Group and Beginners group meet at the same time at different virtual addresses; beginners meeting cover steps 1-4 and have added a section on sponsorship to their meeting. Group held a short group conscience last week where they found out the information on the beginners meeting, but no other significant news.

Treasurer's report

Presented by DCM. No change to the report from November: no contributions and no expenses for the month. Motion to accept report as given. Second. None opposed. Motion carries.

DCM asked how the District would like to handle rent for the church. Suggestions from the discussion included contact church and establish what is happening with the church regarding access/use per COVID restrictions/precautions; just pay the normal rent; and call the church and offer some level of contribution. DCM will contact the church and District will discuss further next month.

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District 28 Meeting Minutes

December 2020 / Page 3 of 3
DRAFT

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DCM report

Western US Canada Forum is on December 19, 2020 to register go to www.aa.org/pages/en_US/regional-and-local-forums. The Western is free and lasts most of the day. They will send registrants an agenda the day of so they can log in and catch any part that they find interesting. DCM went to the Eastern forum, and they had a lot of interesting options. Email attachments included (a) flyers for 2 Christmas alcathons; one has different meeting times on Christmas Eve and again on Christmas day; the other is a full 24 hours of meetings from 9:00 p.m. on December 24 to 9:00 p.m. on December 25. Both alcathons are looking for speakers. Contact information is on the flyers for anyone interested; (b) a flyer for a New Year's Eve, alcathon; (c) the Area calendar for 2021; and (d) the Delegate's report.

On January 7, 2021, a series of 6 workshops on the Service Manual begins, running Thursdays 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.; information is on the NEMDAA website.

Committee reports

Intergroup Liaison: Liaison did not attend. DCM and another GSR happened to attend. Nothing to report other than Intergroup did have some events planned, and they are attempting to find virtual ways to fundraise.

Outreach: The committee will hold a short meeting after this District meeting to discuss progress since last committee meeting. DCM noted that the committee's outreach script was emailed to all GSRs with the agenda. The DCM had also talked about the script to others in the Area, who asked if the DCM could provide a copy. The DCM didn't want to provide it without the committee having a chance to know about it and possibly revise the script. DCM suggests changing introduction and some other tweaks that make the script more generic. The District can then share it with other Districts, GSRs, and others. After discussion, the committee chair asked DCM to suggest revisions and they could discuss it later.

Workshops: See DCM report comments including requests for alcathon speakers.

Old Business

- District *Grapevine* issues: what to do with them
MGS Area 29 had a request for *Grapevines*, but that project changed to having Districts do it locally. Suggestion to send to local men's halfway house. A GSR will reach out to a local house to see if they can use them. A GSR will also contact the women's halfway houses to which District provided *Voices of Women in AA* to determine if they would like some.

New business

- Everybody have good holidays

Motion to adjourn. Seconded. Meeting ended at 7:55 p.m. and closed with the Responsibility Statement.

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