

# AREA 29 ACCESSIBILITIES

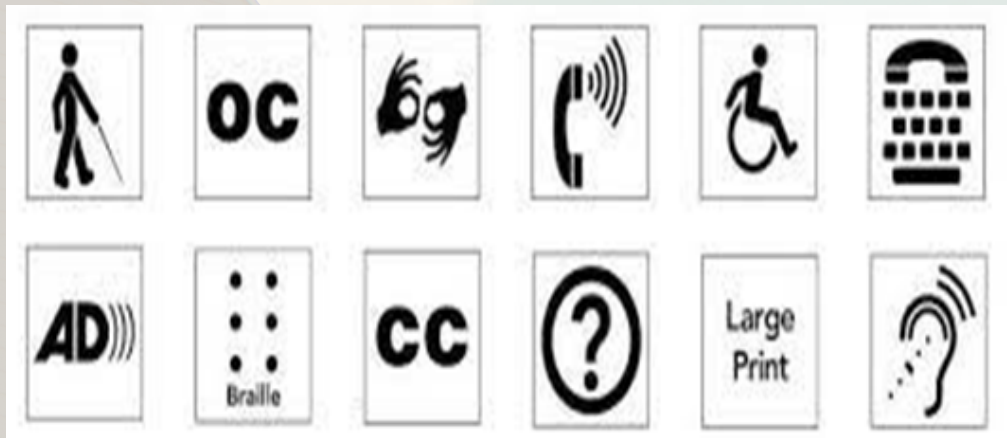
www.marylandaa.org

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## FALL / WINTER 2022

Alcoholics Anonymous



### Livebinder Resource

Refresher: The author of this Livebinder filled with many resources is Chris T. from Austin Texas. Recall that Chris did a comprehensive presentation for us in March 2022 on Assistive Technology for the Deaf, Blind, and Deafblind and he left us with this compilation of resources that others have now utilized across the country. For this and many other accessibility resources go to this link:

<https://www.livebinders.com/b/2410708>

### Interpretation Equipment

The Maryland General Service Audio Committee invested 90% of our 2022 budget in the purchase of an EXMAX EXD-6824 Wireless Tour Guide Voice Audio Transmission System. The new system will be utilized for Spanish language interpretation services during our Maryland State Conventions and at future in-person Area assemblies, committee meetings, workshops, and other events, as needed.

### Equipment (cont'd)

This expenditure is an investment in the future growth of Alcoholics Anonymous in Maryland, as our local Spanish-speaking members continue their efforts to integrate themselves fully into Area 29. The state-of-the-art interpretation system consists of two wireless transmitters, 30 receivers, and an aluminum alloy charging and storage case.



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## ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY



### MDTAP

REMINDER to avail yourself of this service from the Maryland Department of Disabilities **Technology Assistance Program**. They were our March 2023 guest speakers and we learned of many free resources available to us as Maryland residents.

<https://mdod.maryland.gov/mdtap/Pages/MDTAP-home.aspx>

### RCC/CART/WEB CAPTION

Remote Conference Captioning (RCC) offers real-time captioning through the use of Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) service, allowing individuals who have difficulty hearing with the ability to read the text of what all participants are saying.

Did you know closed captioning and subtitles serve two different purposes? Subtitles provide a text alternative for dialogue, while closed captions supplement dialogue and describe other background noises, such as phones ringing.

If you have been attending our monthly Accessibilities meeting, you are familiar with the real-time closed captioning feature provided free to us by Hamilton Relay through the Maryland Department of Disabilities.

### LENDING LIBRARY AND PORTABLE RAMP LOANS

The Maryland Department of Disabilities, Assistive Technology Program (MDTAP) has partnered with Centers for Independent Living across the state to make available a variety of portable ramps to consumers who need short-term solutions for getting in and out of their homes.

<https://mdod.maryland.gov/mdtap/Pages/portableramp.aspx>

This website also offers many aids and services to explore on borrowed terms through the Department of Disabilities inventory of accessibility devices:

- Aids for Daily Living
- Blind & Low Vision
- Cognitive & Memory
- Computers & Tablets
- Deaf & Hard-of-Hearing
- Environmental Controls
- Recreation
- Adaptive Gaming
- Speech
- Switch & Switch Peripherals

<https://mdod.maryland.gov/mdtap/Pages/Equipment-Loan-Closet-Directory-.aspx>

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## DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

### Deaf Intergroup of Texas

Purpose: the AA Deaf Intergroup of Central Texas is a service entity established pursuant to Tradition Nine of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). This Intergroup exists to aid the AA groups in their common purpose of carrying the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers by increasing accessibility to AA meetings for Deaf people in recovery.

Norma A., cofounder of the AA Deaf Intergroup, has an engaging presentation on on the Twelve Traditions as they pertain to Accessibilities and this is also available in written format by contacting us at the Maryland Accessibilities Committee.

She also has a presentation on the topic of service dogs in A.A. If this comes up for you or if you need guidance on this, please reach out and we will put you in touch with Norma.

### Portland Deaf Access Committee of A.A.

In Portland Oregon, PDAC is the liaison between Deaf AA members and AA groups. PDAC pays for interpreters by accepting contributions from AA groups, districts and individual AA members. In keeping with AA Traditions we have no other affiliation and accept no outside contributions.

Please visit them at <https://pdacaa.org/what-we-do/>. We are hoping to create a similar program here in Maryland.

We're excited that PDAC has agreed to be our guest speaker in February 2023 so stay tuned for more details! They appear to be another model committee for deaf access that we could learn from for this mutual effort.

### Deaf/ASL Resources

We have accumulated many resources for the Deaf member in Alcoholics Anonymous that we would love to share with you. Please contact us for live links and more information about the following resources:

1. A list of AA meetings in the DC area who provide ASL interpretation. Thanks to Debbie from Northern VA Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons for this important listing!

2. Google Drive of ASL interpreted A.A. meetings. Please feel free to share, as these were presented in open AA meetings where non-alcoholics can participate as observers.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B3vj4fiMYOa2S1Q0WXdBbnhDcEO?resourcekey=0-NfeEsNloElRabze1ESw8EA>

3. You can find the Fourth Edition Big Book in American Sign Language (ASL) on our website. This version of the Big Book in ASL is signed by Deaf individuals.

[https://www.aa.org/pages/en\\_US/alcoholics-anonymous-asl](https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/alcoholics-anonymous-asl)

4. Dr. Guthmann gave us two presentations that are available in PowerPoint; and she provided us with this valuable link for worldwide deaf resources:

<https://www.sardiprogram.com/dodameetings/>

DODA stands for "Deaf Off Drugs & Alcohol". If you would like to lead a Deaf AA meeting or need help joining a 12 step AA meeting, contact [sobrietywithoutears@yahoo.com](mailto:sobrietywithoutears@yahoo.com).

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## DEAF ACCESSIBILITY

**Deb Guthmann, Ed.D. - Accessibilities Guest Speaker**

Special guest Debra Guthmann, Ed.D., and career professional working with deaf individuals. She is the founding director of the Minnesota Chemical Dependency Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals. She has written numerous articles and book chapters related to Substance Use Disorder within the Deaf community. She teaches classes and holds numerous national and international workshops. Debra came highly recommended by a friend from *Gallaudet University School for the Deaf* and, after we met with her, we knew immediately that she carried a wealth of experience and extensive knowledge about the deaf community. Our committee is extremely interested in trying to assure that A.A. is accessible and even attractive to the deaf population in Maryland.

Dr. Guthmann has developed recommendations for deaf alcoholics. She has notable experience with the variables that impact treatment for alcoholism and outcomes of at-risk persons with disabilities, and she has developed curricula making vocational rehabilitation a strong component of care. She writes that lack of awareness of alcoholism within this population is significant.

In chatting about ASL as a distinct language, she explained how the 12 Steps are used in recovery with deaf members but that much of our terminology does not translate easily depending on individual upbringing and experience. Her use of plain language and picture therapy was profound. We immediately saw the similarities that have arisen in our own plain language translation experience happening now in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Her latest work is (1) a documentary titled *Being Michelle* about a deaf woman who was incarcerated and her experiences as a deaf individual in a prison setting, and (2) a book titled *Deaf People in the Criminal Justice System*.

Here is the link for *Being Michelle*, and it lists where it will be shown for upcoming film festivals and provides a video clip. <https://www.beingmichelle.com/>.

It is unquestionable that most prisons are not adequately trained or equipped to handle deaf and hard of hearing inmates, most of whom undoubtedly are coming in with a history of alcohol and substance use.

Here is a link for the book as well online: <https://gupress.gallaudet.edu/deaf-people-in-the-criminal-justice-system.html>

It has a description for each chapter in English and Sign Language.

### Deaf Access in Prison

We recently sent Dr. Guthmann's name along to the National Corrections Committee for a potential speaker source in an effort to raise awareness about the treatment of deaf alcoholics in prison. Below are some examples of more work with the prison system that she has focused on:

"I did an informal survey of a number of states to try to see how Deaf inmates in those prisons were served, and there is no consistency. I was impressed with Ohio and in that state, they also try to group inmates together if possible, and for 15 years, have had an interpreting agency (cont..)

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## Deb Guthmann, Ed.D. on Corrections

work with them on access, and the agency staff are involved in orientation for new staff at the prisons as well. They also will interpret for 12 step meetings unless there is some other medical or other emergency.

I have notes that I gathered when talking to the various states, but hard to get information as they don't even collect data on who is deaf or hard of hearing, unless it is a prison where they are in the same unit such as Texas or Ohio where they do a bit more work on access.

I had another story from PA where several inmates were in jail for abuse-related issues and needed to take a class that was English-based before they could be released, once they were eligible for parole. Due to language issues, at least 2 of them had to take the class 3 or 4 times, but no effort was made to have it be in sign language or more visual."

There is a considerable disparity regarding research and training related to what is happening in the criminal justice system for this population. The book *Deaf People in the Criminal Justice System*, and documentary film "Being Michelle", provides an opportunity to provide education and help raise awareness about the numerous barriers and injustices that frequently happen with this population.

The book will also provide a resource to teachers-in-training, sign language interpreters, social workers, psychologists, and other service providers who may interact with deaf and/or other disabled people. The film discusses how Michelle's life changed, when she met an individual who eventually took Michelle into her home and helped her to realize her own voice and strength. Throughout the film, Michelle's artwork provides her own depiction of the trauma she survived as well as a means to her recovery.

## Accessibilities and Public Information

We recently had two opportunities to showcase our committee table and works. We were grateful to collaborate with the Baltimore Intergroup (BICAA) to bring the presence of Alcoholics Anonymous to the annual *Senior Power of Aging Expo* at the Maryland State Fairgrounds in Timonium, Maryland. Together with the BICAA CPC committee, we set up on a Wednesday, and staged our table all day on Thursday where we met so many other vendors and providers and handed out business cards and flyers.

Next we attended a *10,000 Steps for Vets* event at Fort Meade to be sure that our local military members are aware that we have an active presence and available as a resource to them.

We plan to actively pursue more opportunities to collaborate with PI/CPC and Intergroups on these events and include our new professionals in our email communications.



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## OUR AA HISTORY WITH THE MILITARY

### SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER: ROGER W. FROM AREA 26 KY

Roger W. is an AA member and past Area 26 Delegate from Kentucky who got sober while he was in the military. He was a Panel 68 Delegate and the Chair of the Conference Grapevine Committee at the General Service Conference. Prior to that, he served for three years as a Delegate in England. In our efforts to grow in carrying the A.A. message to the current military member, Roger taught us how A.A. grew worldwide mainly at the hands of the stranded military members overseas who would communicate with our office personnel in New York. We heard a few heartwarming and heartbreaking accounts of new groups and the members who initiated them.

His presentation ***"A New Pair of Goggles"*** provides glimpses of AA history through a military lens. Sober uniformed servicemembers were a significant part of our history as the AA message found its way around the world, in large part thanks to military members and deployments. Roger started his presentation in 1832 with alcoholic servicemembers enduring the whiskey rationing until 1862. He then moved on into WW1 with Bill W. taking his first drink shortly after he shipped out for "over there" and then later recalled "that ominous warning that he failed to heed". Roger added a new section about Henrietta Sieberling's early days and how, through family moves, she married a servicemember, without whom she would never have been in Akron on that day when Bill called from the Mayflower Hotel. Many of these history presentations talk about "seconds and inches", and to consider where we might be if anyone else had answered the phone that day.

We talked about closing out the 1930's decade with the Rockefeller dinner, and writing the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* that began spreading outside of Akron and New York to far off lands. And then the 1940s, times are going to change: Pearl Harbor, December 7th, 1941. The United States is at war. The whole country was all-in on supporting the war. Next came gas rationing. Our AA secretary Bobbie with Bill made several attempts to appeal to governmental agencies to see how we as recovered alcoholics could do our part.

The Cleveland Central Bulletin predates Grapevine the and was the first newsletter ever deliberately established to help serve the servicemembers who were serving overseas or in the United States.

We next saw paper rationing. The rationing of paper during World War II caused a first edition 8th printing to be the littlest Big Book ever, at least until we came up with a little pocket version. We needed paper to continue printing the Big Book. It happened at a moment when the Jack Alexander article was hitting. Finally, the Big Book sales are exploding and we need to print more, but we can't because of the paper rationings.

Captain Jack, who was a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, is credited with founding the *Loner's Internationalist*, now a service of the General Service Office. The Accessibilities/ Remote Communities assignment oversees this.

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## OUR AA HISTORY WITH THE MILITARY

Roger told us how AA got started in Korea. By 1952, Anne, the Foreign Service Group Secretary, was corresponding with eight Loners in Korea. Then somebody started a group. She connected these eight up with that group and found other people with Grapevine subscriptions. And she connected 15 sober alcoholics on the Korean Peninsula. And that group got off to a great start. That spark never went out. Now they have an online presence. They have meetings and they have a central office that connects you. If you go to Korea, you'll be able to find Alcoholics Anonymous.

And in Germany, a servicemember named Max worked on an American military concern, and he was able to carry the AA message in the German language and is credited as the cofounder of Alcoholics Anonymous in Germany. He was the first guy sober who spoke German, and now they have an autonomous general service office. The Ramstien Air Base group started in 1962. 10th Wiesbaden Roundup invited Bill W. who had to decline due to the number of worldwide invitations.

The Far East Round Up was the first known roundup in the far east in 1967 featuring speakers in English and Japanese. Okinawa reported 21 members by 1968. Two GI's in Taiwan started a group in 1960 with ham radios. In our heyday in the '60s and '70s, the *Stars & Stripes* was the best media that we had, and they listed all the AA meetings everywhere. Mike, an airline pilot working the Vietnam R&R program got drunk, heard the radio announcement for a meeting in Taiwan and got sober again. A.A. members did stay sober and serve in Vietnam. Several GV articles are from there. Dick G., co-founder of Roger's home group got sober in Vietnam.

In 1969 the first Military Treatment Program began at Fort Benning. known as the Benning House; then an Air Force program began in 1967 at Wright Patterson AFB; and in 1965, Long Beach Naval treatment center. Father Martin first presented "Chalk Talk" sometime in the 1960's. In 1972, the U.S. Navy commissioned the filming to distribute to all Navy substance abuse programs worldwide,

This entire segment was full with details and more A.A. history but we don't have space to cover here. By the end of Roger's presentation, and an A.A. story that developed out of Beirut, *The Responsibility Declaration* became so personal and profound that we choked-up over the gravity of its meaning. If you get a chance to hear this presentation, do it! You don't want to miss it!

Most of you know that the AA Grapevine does not receive group contributions but is supported entirely through subscription sales and income from the sale of related material. Roger says "certainly for me the most moving story regarding AA in the military of the decade was captured in the AA Grapevine in April 1984 and The Best of the Grapevine in 1985."

I plan to track them down and I hope this issue inspires you too, as well. Go to <https://www.aagrapevine.org> to review subscription offers and other literature.

**Thank you for your devotion to this service Roger!**

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## THE SUNSHINE CLUB / HOMEBOUND

Our Accessibilities Committee is still impressed by the presentation that Area 06 (CA) did for us in February 2022. It was thorough and reflected so much potential, that we devoted our future meeting to learning more about seniors and how to make ourselves accessible to those AA members who are homebound for any reason. Sadly that program in Area 06 is no longer operational but we then learned about The Sunshine Clubs in California that are experiencing some successes.

As the story goes in 2010 San Francisco developed a group to carry the message to these members. It had been driven into existence through the only place an alcoholic can find help, the hotline. As more calls came in the same folks felt compelled to respond. Soon a membership base formed solely to answer these calls. They developed 'best practices', and outlined guidelines for members wanting to be of service. The list of volunteers grew to nearly one hundred. The group gained such popularity that after a few years spin off groups found their way around the area although none could replicate the numbers, or success this group had created.

Hence, was the beginning of San Francisco's own "Sunshine Club."

Seattle also now has a chapter of the Sunshine Club. Since its inception in October of 2019, the has had four meetings and has around eighteen volunteers. We're still shaping a few small things to our liking, but grateful we got to use the experience from the others before us.

<https://eastsideaa.org/sunshine-club/2020/so-youre-calling-it-the-sunshine-club/>

Bringing Alcoholics Anonymous to the  
*Homebound*

The Sunshine Club brings A.A. meetings to members of the Fellowship who are unable to get out to regularly scheduled meetings due to accident, illness, and other medical conditions or circumstances such as maternity leave. Let's talk about this service!

ASL & Spanish upon request

**November 20, 2022**  
**Sunday at 3 p.m. EDT**  
**ID: 841 2499 3206**  
**pw 326186**

History, Best Practices, and Guidelines  
Presented by TSC Committee members

**Accessibilities@MarylandAA.org**

"So you're calling it the Sunshine Club?"

Come visit us on Sunday November 20th at 3 p.m. EDT to hear a representative from the San Francisco Marin Conty Intergroup's Sunshine Club

<https://aasfmarin.org/bringing-meetings-to-you>

The Mission of the Sunshine Club is to bring meetings to members of AA who are unable to attend regularly scheduled meetings due to accident, illness, or temporary medical condition.



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## Accessibilities Overview II

Our special guest speaker from April 2022 will come back in December to present Part II of all that encompasses Accessibilities in Alcoholics Anonymous. Recall he last covered topics from:

- "Special Needs" to "Access
- AA Grapevine Instagram and Podcasts
- Contents of Accessibilities Kit (F-182W)
- Home Page for ASL on www.aa.org
- Books in Other Formats
- Deaf or Hard of Hearing (MG-13)
- AA Grapevine eBooks and Audiobooks
- Easy-to-Read Literature.
- AA Grapevine – YouTube Channel
- The Accessibility Checklist

We are looking forward to hearing about all of the Accessibility updates since April 2022 and there are a few including the pamphlet "AA and the Older Alcoholic" and the new Accessibility Checklist to name just a few!



## The Baltimore Hispanic Intergroup

**Temporary** Spanish Email Distribution Procedure for Area 29 Accessibilities: While the Hispanic Intergroup continues to grow, we plan to stay in touch and offer as much liaison service to the Area as needed. In that vein, we will separate these communications and work one-on-one with the Hispanic community until further notice.

Therefore, if you are interested in receiving a Spanish translated copy of our minutes, please email us at [AccessArea29@gmail.com](mailto:AccessArea29@gmail.com) to be added to the Spanish email distribution list.

You may reach the Baltimore Hispanic Intergroup at this address. The Intergroup meets once a week every Saturday at 4:30 p.m. at La Ultima Copa

La Oficina Intergrupala Hispana de Baltimore  
1913 Lansdowne Rd., Suite L  
Halethorpe, MD 21227

[AAHispanoBaltimore@gmail.com](mailto:AAHispanoBaltimore@gmail.com); 443-257-1877.

You can also find all of their AA meetings through the Baltimore AA Intergroup website for all of their meetings.

<https://baltimoreaa.org/meetings/?meeting=grupo-la-ultima-copa-7>

We always enjoy catching up with our friends in a meeting at La Ultima Copa, in Lansdowne at least monthly!

The 2023 Maryland State Convention will be Interpreted in Spanish and in ASL; we have a Save-The-Date Flyer already translated in Spanish but it is not uploading correctly, so copies will be hand delivered and circulated at all of the Spanish AA Groups.

# AREA 29 ACCESSIBILITIES

## NEW YEAR 2023!

### Maryland State Convention

The 51st Annual Maryland State Convention will be held on **August 4-6th, 2023** at Delta by Marriott Hunt Valley, 245 Shawan Road, Hunt Valley MD 21031 and we look forward to starting the event planning process now that the venue and dates has been confirmed.

This Save-the-Date has recently been circulated and is currently being translated into Spanish. The State Convention Committee Chairpeople have included a Spanish Liaison on the Committee this year so we hope to have much more Hispanic input and inclusion.

ASL will also be provided, and if you have other Hard of Hearing concerns, please let us know!

### Loners Internationalists (LIM)

#### LONERS-INTERNATIONALISTS

January 15, 2023 @ 3 pm EDT

Special Guest Speakers

THE LONERS-INTERNATIONALISTS MEETING (LIM) IS A CONFIDENTIAL BIMONTHLY BULLETIN SENT TO LONERS, HOMERS, INTERNATIONALISTS, PORT CONTACTS, AND LONER SPONSORS. THE BULLETIN CONTAINS EXCERPTS FROM LIM MEMBERS' LETTERS THAT ARE SENT TO THE GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE (G.S.O.) OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS. THE BULLETIN INCLUDES FULL NAMES AND ADDRESSES. LIM IS DISTRIBUTED ONLY TO THE MEMBERS DESCRIBED WHO APPRECIATE THE NEED FOR CONFIDENTIALITY OF PERSONAL SHARING WITH ONE ANOTHER THROUGH CORRESPONDENCE.



841 2499 3206



PW 326186

[ACCESSIBILITIES@MARYLANDAA.ORG](mailto:ACCESSIBILITIES@MARYLANDAA.ORG)

SPANISH & ASL INTERPRETATION PROVIDED

Roger's presentations inspired us to devote our January 2023 meeting to LIM, Loners Internationalists Meeting. Our General Service Office has a new special worker on the Accessibility desk named Misha, and she has graciously agreed to present with Roger W. on this topic at our January meeting in 2023.

The Loners-Internationalists Meeting (LIM) is a confidential bimonthly bulletin sent to Loners, Homers, Internationalists, Port Contacts, and Loner Sponsors. The bulletin contains excerpts from LIM members' letters that are sent to the General Service Office (G.S.O.) of Alcoholics Anonymous.

... **SAVE THE DATE** ...  
August 4-6, 2023

**51<sup>st</sup> Annual Area 29 Maryland State Convention**  
Hosted by Maryland General Service, Inc. with Al-Anon Participation  
Held at the Delta Hotel by Marriott—Hunt Valley • 245 Shawan Road, Hunt Valley, MD 21031

**Area 29 Maryland State Convention**  
Without Unity, the Heart of AA would cease to beat...  
Sin Unidad, el Corazón de AA dejaría de latir...

**SPEAKERS • WORKSHOPS**  
HOSPITALITY SUITE • ALCATHONS  
SAT BANQUET • DELEGATE REPORT  
SOBRIETY COUNTDOWN  
OLDTIMERS PANEL  
AA HISTORY PRESENTATION  
Ice Cream Social & Live Music  
Friday & Saturday Evenings

**Registration \$36 (cash or check)**  
**\$38 (credit card or PayPal)**  
Convention Pin free for the first 600 Pre Registrations

Convention Hotel Room Rate: \$124/per night + tax  
Hotel reservations must be made by Sunday, July 9, 2023  
For hotel reservations, call 844-781-7404 (Code: MGS 2023 State Convention)  
or online hotel registration click on—  
[Book your group rate for MGS 2023 State Convention](https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1666295673654&key=GRP&app=resvlink)  
<https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1666295673654&key=GRP&app=resvlink>

or scan

Spanish & ASL Interpretation will be provided with additional accommodations for the hard of hearing