

58th Annual Eastern PA General Service Assembly

Meeting Minutes

November 14, 2015

I. Call to order

Melanie S., Panel 65 Chairperson, called to order the regular meeting of the Eastern PA General Service Assembly at 8:59 AM on November 14, 2015 at The Lancaster Host Resort in Lancaster, PA. The meeting began with recitation of the Serenity Prayer and a reading from *Daily Reflections* by Evelyn D., DCM 68, in Spanish and English.

II. Roll call

Ken D., Panel 65 Secretary, conducted a roll call. The following voting members were present for a total of 364 potential votes: See Attachment #1 – official Roll Call Results

III. Approval of minutes from last meeting

There were no minutes awaiting approval because this is the first convention assembly of Panel 65.

IV. Program

- a) Pat F., Delegate, Panel 65 made a welcome statement.

V. New business

- a) The Chairperson called for a motion to affirm the rotation of Curt C. into the area officer position of Officer-At-Large. The motion was made by the Delegate and seconded. The vote was taken by show of hands. There were no votes against. The Chairperson declared the motion passed. No minority opinion was offered.

VI. Subcommittee's Annual Reports

Subcommittee Chairpersons or their alternates presented their annual reports:

Archives by Allison; CPC by Noreen, Corrections by Michael, Finance by Caroline, Grapevine by Ann Marie, Public Information by Brian, Structure by Evelyn, Special Needs (Accessibilities) by Louis and Ad hoc Literature by Serilio. (Written Reports are filed and posted at www.area59aa.org.)

VII. Officer's Annual Reports

Area Officers presented their annual reports to the assembly:

Officer-At-Large by Curt, Treasurer by Steve S., Secretary by Ken D.,
Chairperson by Melanie, Alternate Delegate by Paul M. and Delegate by Pat F.
(Written Reports are filed and posted at www.area59aa.org.)

VIII. Regional Trustee Report

Northeast Regional (Class B Trustee, Richard P. (Area 43) presented an oral report to the assembly:

- Richard was elected to Regional Trustee position in April 2015 via Third Legacy procedure and was “picked from the hat.”
- “I am grateful for the opportunity to serve.”
- He acknowledged past Regional Trustee, J. Gary L. as being very helpful.
- There are 18 Areas from Maryland to Maine in the Northeast Region.
- There are 21 Trustees on the General Service Board.
- Richard acknowledged the presence of The Honorable Ivan L. (Class A Trustee) and Clement C. (Staff of the General Service Office) at the assembly.
- Some thoughts to share include that GSR’s are important!
- He asked all members to help find answers and solutions to our challenges.
- The International convention in Atlanta (July 3-5, 2015)
 - 57,000+ in attendance
 - First-ever hearing impaired meeting chairperson
 - A corrections prisoner attended and spoke at his first outside meeting
 - The financial picture included a \$220,000 loss (Richard P. serves on the Convention Committee). With the large attendance extra hotels, transportation and security has to be added with short notice driving unanticipated costs. Our perspective is that we learn from the issues and be better prepared next convention
- Trends (remember that trends can change) to note:

- Grapevine is running \$207,861 to the positive where they were trend down. The 2016 forecast calls for losses.
- AAWS losses totaled \$283,866 looking at 9 months data. The trend for next year is not good. To understand, we are looking at whether this year has had a lull in sales due to previous price changes. Will sales return to normal? Remember, trends can change.
- “I am excited about the future of A.A. because we have lots of opportunities.”
- Let’s not avoid discussing “singleness of purpose” – there are many younger members with dual addictions. How do we handle that? How can we be more inclusive?
- Richard related a personal experience with a young newcomer. The newcomer did not relate or identify deeply at first but after time and meeting attendance came to realize his defiance and began to realize that he didn’t really know what he was. The young man had gone to jail for stealing a “Stop” sign while intoxicated. He has come to realize that the sign for him was to “Stop!” He recently celebrated four years sobriety in A.A. Richard stated, “Remember that some newcomers really don’t know who or what they really are!”
- Richard stated, “I never like the book, *Living Sober*, when I first came into the Fellowship.” But for those who are not sure. He told a story about Barry (the book’s author), Lois and Bill W. about a guy with many problems. Bill W. asked, “Did you say he said the word ‘alcohol’?” the reply was “yes.” “The rest of it is not our business,” was Bill’s reply.
- We can’t exclude and we are beholden to the principle of independence that means that people vote with their feet. This is our challenge of inclusivity – attraction rather than promotion. Health statistics show that 50% of high school students are heavy drinkers and that there are an estimated 38 million alcoholics in the U.S.A. That means we have plenty to reach.
- Regarding social media, I want to remain open-minded. I went to an ICYPAA dance. Some 500 people attended. Imagine what we could do!
- There are multiple technological platforms and answers 9to these challenges) will probably come from smart, young people in A.A.
- “Are we stuck so that we can have no change at all?” “I say no!”

- I look at diversity – where we came from in 1935. We were primarily older, white men with primarily Christian perspectives. Look at us now – we want more diversity. How attractive are we to non-believers? We publish in over 69 languages to diverse cultures. We renounce politics and social affiliations.
- I got my first Big Book at 15 – when I first got into recovery. I used it to beat people over the head. But, I learned that people would prefer to see a sermon rather than hear a sermon.
- Dr. Bob wrote in the Grapevine in 1949 about how our Fellowship is like a hub with spokes. The members are the spokes and they come in many sizes. No one is more important than the others. The idea is like sobriety – different spokes but all make the whole. I think the answer is that we can listen and be more tolerant.
- Jack Norris (past Chairman of G.S.B.) said that if anything will destroy A.A., it would probably be the bleeding deacons (the Traditions lawyers). We are called on to do things in recovery that we are not comfortable with.
- Regarding social media, we are trusted servants. What messages do we send when we give up our anonymity on Facebook?
- We have the responsibility to be careful and understand those who are attacking our name – they should leave our name alone.
- When I break my anonymity (online), I may be breaking other member's anonymity.
- We may use technology on the message, not on the personality; e.g. online meetings. He related a story about a guy in Greenland who was isolated and started an online meeting. Let's be open-minded and put away the "A.A. police" mentality. If Bill W. was here today, I believe he would be all over the Internet! Thanks!

IX. Meeting returned to the Area Chairperson

- a) DCM 21 was recognized at the microphone for a "point of order" stating, "Our agenda calls for the affirmation of two officers who rotated during this past year: the Chairperson and the Officer-At-Large. We have only attended to the Officer-At-Large."
- b) The DCM continued with a motion that the agenda be followed and that a vote be taken on the affirmation of the Chairperson's rotation. It was seconded.

- c) The Chairperson decided to turn the meeting to the Delegate to chair because the point of order related to her personal situation and wanted to remain impartial.
- d) The Delegate assumed the Chair and stated that she had withdrawn the motion to affirm the Chairperson after the publication of the agenda based on researching our *Structure Manual*. She read the section explaining that one of the duties of the Officer-At-Large is to assume the Chairperson position in the event that the position becomes vacated.
- e) The Delegate called for a show of hands; however, a motion was not read and the assembly appeared to be voting for affirmation rather than for a vote to hold the affirmation.
- f) The Delegate - still presiding – re-open discussion.
- g) Comments at the microphone:
 - a. “The motion is to affirm the Chairperson with a show of hands.”
 - b. “I believe that our Structure Manual has been used as a guide in the past, not taken literally.”
 - c. “No affirmation is required. This motion should not be supported.”
 - d. “I agree. We can now vote to go forward. We need a vote so the Structure Manual is followed. (?)”
- h) The Delegate (presiding) called for the question: to hold an affirmation vote for the Chairperson’s position per the published agenda. (aka “Orders of the Day”)
- i) The vote taken by show of hands with ushers ready to count was clearly substantial unanimity against “holding the affirmation vote.” 9 votes against. No minority opinion stated. Therefore the motion failed.
- j) The result is that the previous Officer-At-Large (Melanie S.) rotation to Chairperson was affirmed by following the *Structure Manual*.

X. The Business portion of the assembly was adjourned at approximately 10:45 AM