

# "We..." E.P.G.S.A. Newsletter

5/15/18

[Edition 1, Volume 7]

*GREETINGS DEAR FRIENDS ON THE JOURNEY....*

**by Ken D., Alternate Delegate &  
Area Chairperson**

I am happy to share my thoughts with you this month in the "Delegate's" column and fill in for Paul M. as he prepares to attend the General Service Conference which begins on April 22nd. Your editor, Glenn S. asked me to write a bit about two related topics: first, about the Conference itself and; second, about the preparations your Delegate makes to attend it.

Starting in 1950, the General Service Conference (G.S.C.) was designed to gather the informed group conscience of the whole Fellowship in the United States and Canada. (Today many countries have their own General Service structure. They work in concert with the U.S.A. & Canada through close communication and a World Service Conference that is held every two years.) The G.S.C. conducts their work through specific committees by reviewing and deliberating "Agenda Items." There are about 75 items for the 2018 G.S.C. Each of the 93 areas in the US & Canada elect a Delegate to attend the G.S.C, work on an assigned committee, and vote on recommendations that come from those committees after they review their assigned agenda items. Our Delegate is assigned to the A.A. Grapevine committee.

In preparation for the G.S.C. our area hosts the Pre-Conference Sharing Session. It is an event that is modeled after the G.S.C. The Delegate listens to the sharing and reads the secretary's notes to understand Agenda items and Area 59's group conscience on selected Agenda Items. (As your Alternate-Delegate, I prepare the same as the Delegate, in case he could not attend the G.S.C.) the Delegate pays specific attention to those Agenda Items that are scheduled for his assigned committee - A.A. Grapevine - and reviews the other background information.

Our Northeast Region holds the Northeast Regional A.A. Assembly (NERAASA) in late February each year. They select presentation and sharing topics that help

## What Happened at the 68th General Service Conference?

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The 68<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference was held in New York from April 22-28, 2018. Area 59 was represented by our delegate, Paul M. If you want to know what went on at the conference, you should plan on attending one of the two (or both) Delegates Conference Reports. The first will be on June 2, 2018 in Selinsgrove, PA at Susquehanna Valley Church of Christ, 200 Roosevelt Ave. Doors open 8am. Meeting starts 9am. The second Delegates Report will be on June 24, 2018 in Newtown Square, PA at the Knights of Columbus, 327 N. Newtown Street Rd. Doors open 8am. Meeting starts 9am. For more info and flyers check out the

Area 59 website.  
[www.area59aa.org](http://www.area59aa.org)

prepare thoughts, questions and ideas related to Agenda Items that may be deliberated by the G.S.C. The Regional Trustee meets with Delegates and Alternate Delegates at NERAASA to review the role Delegates perform at the G.S.C. He also asks Delegates who have already attended a Conference to share tips for being prepared and attentive through the very busy Conference week. NERAASA is open to all A.A. members. I highly recommend it to you!

The Northeast also holds a Northeast Regional Delegate (NERD) annual meeting on the second weekend in March. Delegates and Alternate Delegates, along with any Past Trustee and Past Delegate (from the Northeastern states) meet at this event. The Regional Trustee presents an orientation and overview of the upcoming G.S.C. to help prepare Delegates. Keep in mind that no agenda items are discussed outside the G.S.C. by any Conference members. They only discuss preparation topics to help Delegates anticipate what will happen once they are at Conference. All Conference deliberations are held in committees or on the floor of the main assembly of the Conference to ensure that all members have the opportunity for face-to-face democratic discussions. (In A.A. there are no political parties and no lobbying. The members of the G.S.C. are responsible to A.A. as a whole.)

G.S.C. Membership is comprised of the 93 Delegates from the U.S.A. and Canada; 21 members of the General Service Board of Trustees, members of the A.A. Grapevine and A.A.W.S. boards of Directors; and, some General Service Office staff for their specialized expertise for a total of about 123. As mentioned, the work is broken into committees like, Literature, Public Information, Corrections, etc. This structure allows for much more to be addressed than would be the case if all members had to be "experts" on all topics.

The committees can dispose of an Agenda Item in three ways: 1) take no action; 2) make additional considerations; or, 3) make a recommendation. After committees have finished their work on the first two days of the conference, they make reports to the assembly of all the G.S.C. members: aka "the Conference." Committee recommendations are discussed and voted on by the Conference. Those recommendations that are adopted become "Advisory Actions." These actions are essentially advised actions to the General Service Board for them to carry out through either the A.A. World Services or A.A. Grapevine, Inc. Thus, the operating corporations of A.A. receive the informed group conscience of our Fellowship.

In Area 59, we have over 1,600 registered A.A. home groups. Sadly, only about 550 send their General Service Representative to the Area assembly to share their voice and elect Area officers - including our Delegate. In short, this implies that over half of our groups choose not to participate in our democratic process. We urge all DCMs and special servants to encourage and inspire all home groups to participate by supporting their GSRs to District and Area events - especially the Eastern PA General Service Assembly. 2018 is an election year and we will host many excellent meetings and workshops to make the event worthwhile to all. Any A.A. member and their guests may attend. It will be held the first weekend in November. After all, our three Legacies call us to balance Recovery AND Service AND Unity - they all arise from A.A.'s spiritual principles as a whole. On our own, we could not find the profound power of spiritual recovery from alcoholism. Therefore, we all have an obligation to achieve our Unity by practicing the principles of Recovery and Service.

In Fellowship and Service

Ken D.

Alternate Delegate and Area Chairperson

Area 59, Panel 67

## Area Forums by Steve S. Area Secretary

At the 1965 International Convention Bill W. said, "The first concern of AA members should be with problem drinkers the movement is still unable to reach." Our General Service Office in New York provides the tools to reach the greatest number of these alcoholics. The General Service Structure, which includes Areas, Districts and the GSR positions, was created to facilitate this work. We transmit the group conscience of our Fellowship to our GSO on matters that affect AA as a whole.

This year Area 59 is trying something new. We are holding "Area Forums" in the same spirit that our General Service Office holds Regional Forums. The Area Committee voted for this at our December 11, 2017 Quarterly Meeting. The purpose of these Forums is to inform our membership about how General Service operates, so that we can reach more alcoholics in ways that individual groups cannot.

Regional Forums are weekend sharing and informational sessions designed to help the General Service Board, A.A. World Services, Inc., the Grapevine Corporate Board, the Grapevine Staff, and the General Service Office Staff stay in touch with A.A. members, trusted servants and newcomers to service throughout the A.A. service structure. They occur every two years in each Region and are paid for by our General Service Office. Forums rotate between the 18 Areas that make up the Northeast Region, from Washington, DC to Maine.

Area Forums are single day events and are held at the request of a District, or preferably, a group of Districts. The District selects the location and date and also provides the setup and food. Area 59 reimburses the costs and plans the program, which includes an open mic session for questions about service.

The goal of a workshop should be to give people useful information that will help them in their service work. The Area Forums are held so our members can learn more about General Service. This will help our DCM's, GSR's and home group members to contribute to a more informed group conscience, which is vital for this work.

We held our first Forum on March 31 in Ephrata. Topics included What Is a GSR?, The Upside Down Triangle, Problems Other than Alcohol, Common Ways Traditions are Broken and the General Service Conference. Our next scheduled Forum will be on July 28 in Williamsport. Other Districts in Area 59 are also considering having a Forum. See our Area Calendar for details <http://area59aa.org/E-CalendarOfEvents.htm>.

Districts are also encouraged to include topics related to General Service in their own workshops. Our Delegate, Area Officers and Past Delegates are available to attend workshops to make presentations about General Service.

We hope to see you at an upcoming Forum or that your District will request one. Please contact our Area Chairperson at [chairperson@area59aa.org](mailto:chairperson@area59aa.org) for more information

## Archives in Area 59

by The Archives Committee

In June of 1981 our Area 59 Archives committee was formed. Its mission mirrored that of A.A.'s archives, *"to keep the record straight so that myth does not predominate over fact as to the history of the fellowship"*. Bill W. in an early letter about the need for Archives commented *"It is highly important that the factual material be placed in our files in such a way that there can be no substantial distortion"*.

When proposed in 1981 as a committee, Bob W. was appointed as temporary chairman of the committee. He was a DCM from District 21 at the time and was the one who brought forward the proposal. When he rotated out in 1983 he was appointed the first Area Archivist. We know from our records that Jim S. from Allentown was our next archivist, beginning sometime around 1987. Jim retired from the position in December 1999. BJ F. was his assistant archivist who then assumed the archivist position in 2000. In 2002, we show that the Area 59 archives collection was moved from Allentown to Bensalem where BJ F. lived. BJ died in 2008 and Denny D. was appointed Area Archivist. In April 2009

Donald H. became the assistant archivist and that year the archives collection was moved to the North Wales location it is in today. In 2012, Denny retired and Donald became the Area Archivist.

In our early years, the Area archives existed only as an ad hoc subcommittee, and consisted of 2-3 appointed DCM's. Our current committee now consists of six DCM's, the Archivist and Assistant Archivist. Our committee mission statement states our purpose is *"in conjunction with the Archivist and Assistant Archivist is to collect, preserve and maintain Area 59 archive materials. The committee is to also provide information to those seeking vital historic details within the Area"*.

One of our primary tasks is to collect group histories. This is important because GSO does not collect group histories. Were we not to do this, this important piece of our growth would be lost. We also collect Area and District minutes, Area structure manuals, flyers and programs associated with Area events and all things EPGSA! Why is this important? Have you even been to a sharing

session when someone asks, "has this ever happened before?" At pre-conference the topic assigned to Archives was to suggest possible topics for the next conference. There was a list provided of past topics—this came from what was collected from records from past conferences. So it is with our Area archives. Donald is often asked "What did we do for the last Area Day(s)?" Or another recent question "Was there ever a literature committee before the current one formed?" This question is answered by Archives. Can you imagine a panel needing information before a vote? The A.A. Traditions were formed from the sum of our early experience. Look to the back of our 12 & 12 before the long form of the traditions where we read "Our experience has shown..." We know this by the keeping of records of our early experience. And so, this is the importance of Archives.

Where are we going in the future? The Archives committee is moving into the future by beginning the task of saving our records in electronic form. This is not to say that paper records should be discarded- we have all seen the

great value and beauty of a preserved original. However, an electronic record has its own special value. When we get a request now for a group history we may need to make a trip to the storage unit to find it and copy it. If it is scanned, it can be made immediately available. Another important value to electronic documents is that they can be made searchable

making research much easier. In paper form research can be challenging. In fact, much of the work we do today in our storage is organizing and filing records in order to be able to find what is needed.

The Archives committee is committed to making Area 59 history available to the fellowship. Be sure to come

and see our display at the Convention. And don't forget that you can be a part of that history. Do you have something to donate? Are you saving your records? Please be sure to provide your group history to Archives!

*The Archives Committee*

## **Spotlight: District 60** *by Glenn S., DCM*

District 60 is located in the lower northeast section of the city of Philadelphia. Philadelphia is a city of neighborhoods and district 60 is comprised of the river wards of Fishtown, Kensington, Port Richmond and Bridesburg and the neighborhoods of Frankford, Juniata, Northwood, Oxford Circle, Olney, and Lawncrest. District 60 was formed in 1993, when district 22 was split. There are currently 28 registered groups in the district, including one of the oldest groups in Philadelphia. The Greater Northeast Group of Alcoholics Anonymous will celebrate their 74<sup>th</sup> anniversary on June 2, 2018. On March 6, 1940, the first open meeting of the Philadelphia group of A.A. was at George S.'s house on Arrott Street in what is currently part of district 60. Bill W. and Lois W. attended this meeting. One of our past DCM's, Pat F. went on to be Area 59 Delegate Panel 65.

District 60 meets the third Sunday of the month at St. Michael's Lutheran Church 2139 East Cumberland St., Philadelphia at 1pm. We usually have 10-15 GSRs in attendance each month. Although we are a relatively poor district, we do have a website, [www.district60aa.org](http://www.district60aa.org), thanks to our webmaster, Ruth D. The website has a meeting list, Events schedule, District meeting minutes, A.A. Steps and Traditions and the District 60 structure manual. The district's Tradition Committee holds a weekly Tradition meeting at the Greater Northeast Group every Sunday at 6pm. We typically have 2 workshops per year, usually combined with other district to pool our resources. We recently had a workshop on May 12, 2018 that had about 60 in attendance. Over the last year District 60 hosted the SEPIA/Area 59 Share-a-Day and co-hosted with District 27 the Pre-Conference Sharing Session. District 60 is a unique section of Philadelphia, with some parts thriving and other parts in utter decay. Some of the worst areas have the best A.A. presence and District 60 is determined to continue to help the next suffering alcoholic by supporting and educating groups in the Traditions and General Service.

**Keep up to date with General Service in Eastern PA by visiting our web site: [www.area59aa.org](http://www.area59aa.org)**

"We..." is a newsletter for members the Area 59 (E.P.G.S.A.) General Service Committee, Service Volunteers and interested Fellowship members. For information contact [literature@area59aa.org](mailto:literature@area59aa.org)

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A.A- SOLUTION FOR ALL GENERATIONS

2018 G.S.C. THEME