

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

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From the Current Delegate

by Paul M., Delegate

GREETINGS TO THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS...

I will be forever so grateful to the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous and Area 59 for the opportunity to serve at the 68th General Service Conference. I have had the opportunity to report back to the fellowship in the Selinsgrove Area for Mini Assembly I / DCR and also Mini Assembly II /DCR in Newtown Square, Pa., which allowed for the coverage geographically of the Northern and Southern parts of Area 59, to be informed of what happened at the General Service Conference in New York City the week of April 22nd – 28th, 2018.

Part of my duties as the Delegate is to report back to the fellowship, "What I saw, and Heard, and Felt", as well as what had taken place at the GSC. Service Manual. (pg.- S 53)

What I Saw I saw a group of men and women, who have a love and a strong compassion for Alcoholics Anonymous, who care about the future of A.A. and for those who are yet still to come. So that Alcoholics Anonymous will be here for our children and our grandchildren, if and when it may be needed for them.

What I Heard Passionate deliberation and strong opinions, both good and bad. I heard things that made me cringe, things that gave me goose pimples, and things that brought tears to my eyes.

What's Happening at the GSO?

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In 2019 there will be two openings for Class A (nonalcoholic) Trustees. Class A Trustee's are chosen from a variety of professional backgrounds, including doctors, lawyers, clergy, social workers, and educators. For more information please reach out to the Delegate or the General Service Office.

There are also two Class B Trustees who will be rotating, one for the Northeastern Region, and another from the Southwest region, as well as a Trustee-At-Large from Canada. Please reach out to the Delegate or the General Service Office for any members interested in applying.

Area 59 website.
www.area59aa.org

What I Felt In the second year as a Delegate at the General Service Conference, I was much more relaxed, with a lot less anxiety. I felt very comfortable and more confident representing Area 59. I also had a “Spiritual Experience” that is a very difficult thing to try and explain, because as we all know trying to explain something like that is hard to put into words. It truly is what it says, a “Spiritual Experience” it’s something that is felt within oneself, others cannot truly feel my pain nor my joy, it can only be felt from within, no matter how I try to explain it, it has to come from within. I am hopeful that those who have had such experiences can understand what it is I am trying to share here. I will always be so very thankful to the members of Area 59 for allowing me this lifelong memory. ODAAT. I am Blessed.

The Big Book

As it is very well known the Big Book has been interpreted into many different languages, 71 thus far, with 20 pending. This year on May 05, 2018 the Navajo Big Book was presented to the President of the Navajo Nation, at the 25th Red Road Convention in Albuquerque. The Navajo Nation doesn’t have a written language, so it had to be produced in an Audio version, which had taken over four years to produce but has finally come to fruition.

Save The Date

February 22-24, 2019 Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly (NERAASA), will be held in our neighboring state of Maryland in Hunt Valley. Please see our area website for details. Area59aa.org.

SOME FACTS FROM 2017

90 employees at the GSO responded to more than 90,000 emails in 2017

Corrections at the GSO answered over 65,000 letters

Archives received over 1300 requests

905,000 Big Books Sold

aa.org received over 12,000,000 visits, 1,000 visits per day regarding the need for help with a drinking problem.

Service is the Key by Pat F., Past Delegate Panel 65

“Our Twelfth Step—carrying the message—is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven’t been given the truth may die. Hence, an A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer—ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.’s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service. Services include meeting places, hospital cooperation, and intergroup offices; they mean pamphlets, books, and good publicity of almost every description. They call for committees, delegates, trustees, and conferences. And, not to be forgotten, they need voluntary money contributions from within the Fellowship.” AA’s Legacy of Service by Bill W.: Service Manual p. S1

February 26, 1986 was a day I’ll never forget nor ever regret. It was the day that I made the conscious decision to stop drinking. And through God’s abundant grace, I have not had a drink since. My journey to recovery started in Al-Anon in 1978. After watching my husband, Jack C., suffer for three months with cirrhosis, it catapulted me across that imaginary line we all know so well. However,

due to my deep denial, after his death it took me four more years to finally surrender.

Fortunately, I asked to enter the rooms of AA. Nancy Nurse and Tom H. were my first sponsors, who guided me toward service. Washing cups and ashtrays came first. Next, staying after the meeting and cleaning the meeting room which entailed vacuuming, sweeping, and putting the chairs away. Then I heard, “It’s time you made coffee.” That was interesting. First time I put 2 pounds of coffee in the pot and an old timer said, “Who made this coffee?” After chiding me a bit, he proceeded to explain how to do it. I had never made 100 cups of coffee before and in those days, people showed up at least a half hour before the meeting started.

They told me that the more I gave back to AA, the more I would receive. In my case it has been true. I started chairing meetings and even though I did not believe I was that bad, I started speaking at meetings. Next at my homegroup, the Sisters of Sobriety, I was elected Secretary, then Treasurer. Wow. Now I was treading on thin ice and did not have a clue where to begin. Again, an old timer told me to get a copybook and write everything down and bring it to every meeting. With every position I was elected to there was always someone who walked before me, guided me and helped me. They told me to “suit up and show up and let God do the rest!” Intergroup Rep. was followed by the Chair of the home group, and then General Service Rep.

Every week we travelled to a shelter or an institution, a prison or a hospital. I was starting to feel a part of and not so alone. I loved being on the CPC (Cooperation with the Professional Community) Committee, taking medical students to meetings. That evolved into my being elected Assistant and then Director of CPC. Subsequently, I served as Vice-President being charged with planning the Round-Up, and then they changed the name and I became the first Chair of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Intergroup (SEPIA) Steering Committee. One of the most outstanding events during that period was when they decided to make the monthly meeting non-smoking. That meeting was remarkable! During the same time, I became involved with District 60. Rotating from GSR, to Secretary, to Treasurer, to ADCM, to DCM. You talk about an amazing journey, I was on the ride of my life! Service was my anchor, keeping me sober and fulfilled. Meanwhile, when I was asked to represent my group at the EPGSA Convention and Assembly to elect officers of the new panel for the next year, I felt honored. Seeing the election process and being among a thousand people from all over Eastern Pennsylvania was absolutely incredible.

Well, I moved from Philadelphia to Glenside, where I continued in service. I hadn't planned on it but while at a business meeting, no one stood for office, so I stepped up to be AGSR, then GSR, ADCM and DCM for District 24.

That translated into becoming Chair of the Finance Sub Committee and finding myself in a position to stand for Area office at the Convention. Once again I said to my higher power, "OK if you want me to do this, I put myself in your hands." They placed a hat covered with dollar bills on my head, and I was elected to be Treasurer of Area 59. Consequently, I served as Chair, then Alternate Delegate and Delegate on Panel 65 at the New York General Service Conference. The greatest and most gratifying of all my service work was serving as Delegate. I am happy to report that all of you can become Delegate, too.

The years of service chronicled above has brought me to today where I am truly blessed, and I encourage each and every one reading this to put on some new shoes and step into a new service position.

Now as Past Delegate, I have the privilege of serving as the Treasurer for the 61st EPGSA Convention and Assembly November 2 – 4, 2018. With every registration I receive, I cheer you on, knowing we will be in Gettysburg together working to help alcoholics find relief and a new way of living. I really look forward to being with you at the convention.

With Love, Pat F.

I am responsible. . . When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.

Ralph O, DCM 45

Bridging the Gap

We are grateful for the opportunity to share about the work our Treatment Facility and Accessibility committee has been doing for the past 18 months. When we started in January of 2017, with the review of the Delegate recommendations, we agreed on a course of action. In other words, the committee agreed with the Chairperson then, to pursue the Bridging the Gap, Delegate recommendation #15 - *Develop a presentation to encourage districts and intergroups in the formation of Bridging the Gap programs.* You may remember responding to the early survey questions that went to each DCM and Central Intergroup Office in Area 59. Early responses were recorded and the finding showed; less than six respondents were aware of, or doing anything with the Bridging the Gap program.

The treatment committee participated in the SEPIA/Area 59 Share a Day in Philadelphia in February of 2017. It was in that presentation that we spoke of our early findings and

encouraged local districts and central offices to begin work with the Bridging the Gap program. Introduction occurred at that meeting with the Treatment Committee Chair – Dave L., of the SEPIA Central Office. Dave and his committee continue to work to establish Temporary Contact programs at this time. They have had some success with establishing willing A.A. volunteer lists. The status now is to be able to present and establish program acceptance with the facility administration.

The treatment committee concluded by the fall of 2017, after a second survey was sent, that there was no functioning Bridging the Gap (BTG) program anywhere within Area 59. Research had already started with the neighboring Areas within the Northeast Region. These efforts are in direct response to Delegate recommendation #8 – *Consider contacting Treatment Accessibilities chairs in other areas in the N.E. to see what is being done in their areas.* Every area website was visited and messages of

inquiry sent to those that have a BTG mention on the websites.

Late in 2017 the Treatment committee invited the Corrections committee to work together on a combined workshop for Bridging the Gap. This is in direct response to the Delegate recommendation #7 – *Consider holding workshops with other Area Subcommittees.* During the initial research for the first workshop the combined committees determined that to build a sustainable BTG program there were three (3) key steps to be accomplished. First, we must build an active A.A. volunteer data base of willing candidates for temporary contacts. It was recommended at the first workshop that this occur at the district level. The second focus was identified as approaching facility administration for approvals to present the program inside the facility. At the same time, we need to educate the A.A.'s that take meetings into the facilities on how to introduce the BTG program to the candidates. Third, and last is

to manage the connection and success of the applicant request to the willing A.A. on the outside. This first workshop took place in District 40, in the Northeast part of Area 59 with great participation from The Northeast Intergroup Association.

Following the first workshop the Treatment committee focused research on the Northeast Region and beyond to find other Treatment committees that are working a BTG program. Three areas responded to the inquiry mentioned above, prior to NERAASA. NERAASA was a great fact gathering weekend. Both Treatment roundtable discussions were on Bridging the Gap. Much of the discussion in both roundtables centered on the guidelines from Area 69 – Utah. Area 48 had discovered the same documents that we had. The outcomes for this committee representative from the NERAASA conversations is that Areas need guidelines. In order to develop a sustainable

Bridging the Gap program, there must be a set of printed guidelines that will direct each new participant to committee work that must be continued after each panel rotation.

The second Bridging the Gap workshop was being planned for May along with editing of working guidelines for the Area to use. The Treatment Chair was assigned the responsibility of developing the program for the second BTG workshop dated May 12th. In developing the program, we searched for people or offices that have experience with the establishing relationships with facility administrations. There is very little experience to lean on. Also, the search for districts, intergroups or areas that have a program for A.A. training to deliver the message of BTG is also very limited. The final determination was to deliver the second part of the BTG program in theory and provide whatever supporting tools that would be helpful. The Keynote speaker spoke

from great experience as to how they present information to administration and then carry information inside the facilities to potential A.A.'s on a regular basis. This experience is to our south in Area 29.

The efforts to date have established collaboration with three Central Office committees working with Treatment and Corrections, Bridging the Gap and Temporary Contact programs. Our third workshop this year is being planned for August 26th. The primary focus of this "Bridging the Gap" #3 will be to review the key parts of the workbook of guidelines and deliver a series of sample presentations; volunteers, facility administrators and groups. The area map of residential Treatment facilities should also be completed for this workshop.

Hope to see many at the workshop.

Respectfully submitted,

Ralph O. – DCM 45 Treatment Chair – Area 59

Spotlight: District 35

by Andy S., DCM

District 35 is the southwestern most district in Area 59. Bordered to the south by Maryland and stretching from Hanover in the east to McConnellsburg in the west. The district consists of Adams, Franklin and Fulton counties and the Hanover area. District 35 is comprised of 42 groups with 78 meetings. There are two clubhouses in the district, The Harbor in Shippensburg and Club ODAT in Hanover. Our monthly district meeting is held the 3rd Monday of the month (7pm) at the New Guilford Brethren in Christ Church, 1575 Mont Alto Rd., Chambersburg, PA. We have a website, www.d35pa-aa.org, with a meeting list, events calendar, service positions and printable copies of our newsletter: "The Communicator". Our newsletter comes out 3 times a year, the next issue will be available in September. District 35 also has a Hotline-1-800-296-9289.

We have an intergroup which is not a "Central Intergroup" as described in the A.A. Guidelines. It was formed as Hanover Intergroup because of the concentration of meetings in and around Hanover.

Our district is blessed with a radio station that graciously gives us free air time for Public Service Announcements. WPF 91.3 a Christian station in Carlisle with a listening area from Harrisburg to Maryland has aired two shows last year and will air two this year. The shows are intended to inform the general public about A.A. and are aired twice. A female and male A.A. member is interviewed by a radio personality for a 15 minute show. We provide the questions that the station asks so that we get out the message we want to get aired. To prepare for the show we meet to decide on the questions and soon after have a couple of rehearsals to prepare. We have received nothing but positive feedback and one listener requested 50 CDs and made a generous donation to the station.

Upcoming events in District 35 include; PENNSCYPAA XXX, August 17-19 in Chambersburg and Chambersburg's longstanding Thanksgiving Thon with meetings around the clock and a super buffet. For more info visit our district website, www.d35pa-aa.org.

Keep up to date with General Service in Eastern PA by visiting our web site: www.area59aa.org

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

2019 GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE THEME

"OUR BIG BOOK- 80 YEARS, 71 LANGUAGES"