

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

5/27/17

[Edition 1, Volume 3]

From the Current Delegate

by Paul M., Delegate

"Connecting with our Fellowship As A Whole."

Greetings to all! Attending the 2017 General Service Conference (G.S.C.) in Rye, NY, was a marvelous service and spiritually uplifting experience. Thanks to all members of Eastern PA for your wonderful encouragement and support.

contact your DCM or any Area Officer if you have questions about this opening.

If your home group, district or inter-group would like any area officer to attend or speak at your anniversary

"Attending the 2017 G.S.C. was a marvelous and spiritually uplifting experience."

I look forward to sharing a summary of the proceedings at our upcoming Mini-Assemblies: on June 10th in Spring Brook, PA (D 39); and on June 24th in Kennett Square, PA (D56). These are open to all members and we encourage your attendance.

The A.A. World Services Nominating Committee is taking application resumes for an A.A.W.S. non-Trustee Director position. Please

or service event, please feel free to call or contact us.

Our service email contacts are listed at www.area59aa.org.

I thank you for the opportunity and support to serve as your Delegate! I look forward to seeing you along the journey.

Paul M.

Area 59 Delegate

Welcome to "We..."

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My apology for the delay in publishing Volume 3. Of course, the excuse is that it has been a busy time for area officers, so we hope you will forgive us. We have just passed the "G.S. Conference season." So, our Delegate will be ramping up his opportunities to share the items, discussions and results for 2017. You can hear live presentations at either of our upcoming Mini-Assemblies: see our Area 59 web calendar at www.area59aa.org.

It may not be too soon to remind your group treasurers that the annual EPGSA Convention is coming the first weekend in November in Gettysburg, PA. Setting funds aside for your GSRs to attend is essential and important in supporting our future Unity.

Wishing you & yours a summer of freedom...

“Supporting Our Future”

2017 G.S.C. Theme

CPC Service Work: Supporting Our Future

by Richard W., Area 59 CPC Chair

Cooperation with professionals, like everything else in A.A., is based on personal contact. What a local committee decides to do will be dictated by local needs and experience. A look at our history shows clearly that cooperation with professionals has been an integral part of the fellowship since our beginnings. A.A. might never have gotten off the ground, or progress would have been much slower, without the help of nonalcoholic professionals.

For decades, healthcare, psychiatric, legal, social welfare, and other professionals had been frustrated in trying to discover what was wrong with us and trying to figure out how to fix it. Then, these friends observed that Bill W. and Dr. Bob appeared to be on to something. They seemed to have discovered a solution to our dilemma that brought hopeless alcoholics into recovery. These professionals could provide a virtually unending stream of victims in search of relief from their malady to A.A. and A.A. seemed ready to provide a solution. Thus, the idea that A.A. should cooperate but not affiliate with these entities became a reality.

We are not in competition with these non-A.A.s; we have our separate functions. A.A. is not in the business of education, research, medicine, counseling, treatment, prevention, or funding. We simply have a message to carry about a program of recovery for alcoholics – a program that has worked for millions who “want it.” The professional can help the alcoholic “want it” – by education, counseling, and rehabilitative treatment – and can also aid by encouraging community awareness programs which highlight the millions still suffering from the progressive illness of alcoholism.

By action of the General Service Board, January 1970, the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) – a spin off from the Public Information Committee – was developed. A similar Conference committee was formed the following year. Since that time, A.A. members in local areas have been responding to local need by establishing CPC committees.

Members of the CPC committee inform professionals about A.A. – what we are, where we are, what we can do and what we cannot do. They attempt to establish better communication between A.A.s and professionals and to find productive and creative ways of cooperating without affiliating. The professional community may include physicians, clergy, judges, therapists and probation officers or any other professional who comes in contact with the alcoholic.

Cooperating with nonalcoholic professionals is an effective way to carry the message to the sick alcoholic. Such people often meet the alcoholic in places where A.A. is not present. Through professionals, alcoholics may be reached who might otherwise never find the program, or they may be reached sooner with the help of informed non-A.A.s.

A professional can be a family doctor or other healthcare professional, a member of the clergy, a law enforcement or court official, an educator, a social worker, an alcoholism or other counselor, or anyone who deals with problem drinkers during their work. Many of these people often encounter the suffering alcoholic, and despite public awareness efforts, many of them simply don't know what to do with a drunk.

CPC work can begin when individual A.A.s reveal their membership to their doctors or drop a quiet word in the ear of a pastor, priest, or rabbi that an A.A. member is available to the congregation. Groups participate in CPC by welcoming professionals and future professionals to open meetings. Committees on the area or local level actively seek ways to make contact with professional people and set up programs to increase knowledge and understanding of Alcoholics Anonymous. CPC workers understand the importance of, and work within, the guidance of the A.A. traditions.

“Our [A.A.’s] 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 for alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither, and those who haven't been given the truth may die.”

Source: The A.A. Service Manual, “A.A.’s Legacy of Service” Reprinted with permission.

Supporting Our Future by Cultivating Diversity *by Hugh H., Past Delegate, Area 59, Panel 61*

Thoughts on Diversity, Attraction and A.A.’s Future

Have you ever gone to a meeting where you felt like you didn't fit in? I have. Once was on purpose: I went to a Korean meeting because I wanted to experience what it's like to be in a meeting where I can't understand what's being said. Unfortunately—out of politeness I'm sure—from the time I arrived they insisted on using English. Another time was accidental: in early sobriety, after driving to two listed meetings that had closed, I wound up at a meeting quite far from home where I didn't know anybody. That wasn't a problem. But for the first 50 minutes the only topic of discussion was Hepatitis B and that *was* a problem. Somebody finally asked, “Shouldn't we be talking about alcohol?” A fight almost broke out.

I found the kindness and solicitude of the Koreans very attractive. The focus on Hep B and in particular the animosity to alcoholism in the second meeting was unattractive, if not repulsive, at least to me.

The attractiveness of diversity was not important to me in the beginning. Being old, white and male, I have no trouble finding meetings with people like me. I eventually realized that it wasn't all about me; it was all about helping the still-suffering alcoholic. Part of that was thinking about the fact that being young, non-white or female can make it hard to feel like one is in the right place. Today I try to make a point of welcoming people who are not like me, particularly at my home group.

In the short 82-year history of our Fellowship we've sometimes been less than encouraging—if not downright antagonistic—to women, young people, addicts, African-Americans, Asians, smokers, non-smokers, low-bottom drunks, wet drunks, LGBTQ alcoholics, atheists: the list could be extended to many other categories of human beings. I've seen and heard many of these prejudices in my much-less-than 82 years in A.A. I've also admitted to myself that I sometimes harbor such prejudices. It's apparently human nature to feel more favorable to people that are like us and less favorable to those that are unlike us. So it's important to recognize these prejudices, bring them out of hiding and actively work against them, both in ourselves and in the Fellowship around us.

Without attraction, A.A. would be unable to grow, because Tradition XI says we can't promote ourselves. If A.A. were unattractive, who would come? And without diversity, we would be shutting the doors on large segments of alcoholic populations. Without a continual flow of newcomers, A.A. would fade away.

When I was a GSR in the early-mid 1990's, whether or not A.A. should publish what came to be the pamphlet, "A.A. for the Black and African American Alcoholic," was a lively topic of discussion. My initial feeling was that singling out a specific group like this would only be divisive to A.A.'s unity. But after listening to my fellow alcoholics, particularly those who were Black, I changed my mind. I heard the stories of prejudice that Blacks had encountered. I learned about the difficulties they had even where there was no blatant racism. This convinced me that we always need to make every reasonable attempt to reach out to Black alcoholics who may feel that they don't belong. By extension, we should do the same for any type of alcoholic who may have trouble believing they are welcome.

This pamphlet, like a number of them, is aimed squarely at those not yet in, or who are new to the Fellowship. After they have been around for a while, I trust that they will experience what I have: that our unity as alcoholics far outweighs any differences we may have as individuals.

Washington Irving wrote, "Society is like a lawn, where every roughness is smoothed, every bramble eradicated, and where the eye is delighted by the smiling verdure of a velvet surface; he, however, who would study nature in its wildness and variety, must plunge into the forest, must explore the glen, must stem the torrent, and dare the precipice." A.A. can never become like the unimaginative suburban society that Irving describes. To survive, it must instead remain a vast array of wildly differing landscapes with a place for every alcoholic of every type.

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

Spotlight: District 27 *by Burnadette S., DCM*

I am very honored to be asked to provide a highlight of my district. District 27 is in the city of Philadelphia specifically South Philadelphia to Center City (Market Street). In total we have 39 groups that are represented and even more meetings within this district. The attendance at our normal district meeting is normally anywhere from 15 to 20 GSRs. To get the rest of the groups involved we currently have an active Visitation Committee.

Our District lies within the SEPIA Intergroup and many of the duties that would be handled by the area's subcommittees are taken care of by our wonderful Intergroup. In the lifetime of this district there have been multiple locations for the district meetings before ultimately moving to SEPIA in 2009. We hold our monthly district meetings there every 4th Tuesday at 7:30pm. These meetings are modeled after the area meetings. We begin, after prayer, with the Tradition and Concept of the

month. Sometimes we have guests to provide their experience with the tradition and concept. We do discussion about how it pertains to each homegroup. Following this section of the meeting the GSRs provide summaries and actions of each homegroup.

There was once a time when our district had an excess of finances and it was decided to have a celebration of AA in Philadelphia at the site of one of our oldest meetings, the Center City Group. This tradition is still carried out today. In fact, this year's celebration had Melanie M. as the guest speaker. Besides this celebration the Center City Young People's group often holds events that are well attended by many in our district. The Philly Bid committee for ICYPAA also holds several events in our district. One more tradition for our district is to hold a combined district workshop with other districts within Philadelphia and we often use topics from the General Service Conference. Currently District 27 has a website and website chair, where these events are listed in the calendar. If anyone is every

interested in checking out any of these events or group anniversaries check out district27.org.

Supporting Our Future: A Society In Action

*by Curt C., Area 59
Treasurer*

Action to support our future. Well, what kind of future? Do I find Alcoholics Anonymous on a solid path and am I to continue the trend, or is a correction in order? During panel 65, I had the privilege of serving as Area 59 Registrar and saw firsthand what seems to be a trend in A.A. As membership remains flat, the number of registered groups continues to grow. A consequence of more meetings is more 7th tradition expenses paying for rent and coffee pots. Flat membership means no growth in treasuries. And of course, who hasn't heard talk of a buck in the basket being outdated due to inflation?

It is not uncommon to hear a group calling out for help, having low attendance. Many groups have no funds

available to send GSR's to service events or to send upstream to Intergroup, District, Area or GSO. There are many groups that open their doors but don't become registered and so have no connection to A.A. beyond those doors. Might we have enough meetings?

In my hometown of Hershey from 1957 up to 2012 there were 3 homegroups providing 13 meetings a week within a five-mile radius. Today we have 3 more homegroups providing 3 additional meetings. In my district, it is difficult to keep track of meetings as they come and go rather often, but at last count

there were well over two hundred meetings a week within a twenty-mile radius.

One solid way to support the future of A.A. is to help maintain a strong homegroup with an informed GSR and Intergroup Rep. Also, to support and improve existing meetings. When that basket gets passed around, consider putting in more than a buck. Attend those business meetings and insure that 7th tradition funds are being put to their best use. And rather than getting a new coffee pot to heal a resentment, just clean out the one you have.

That Name...

The name of our newsletter – “We...” was picked out of thin air just to get started. Well, perhaps it refers to the Unity that comes from our common welfare that is so important to effective Service. But, if you would like to submit a different name, we're open to that. Just send your feedback to chairperson@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 chairperson@area59aa.org