

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

5/15/19

Edition 2, Volume 1

From the Current Delegate

by Ken D., Delegate, Panel 69

"Service is gratitude in action."

Dear Friends,

My hope is that this edition finds you well as we trudge the road of happy destiny! It is an especially busy time of year for delegate duties – most of my focus is preparing for the 2019 General Service Conference. All delegates are assigned to a Conference committee to spread the work out. While all the background material needs to be reviewed, delegates spend most of their time and research on the Agenda Items (proposals) before their assigned committee. I have been assigned to the Corrections committee.

My sponsor suggested early in my service journey that I do not have to "make it up" like I did when I was in "Ken's anonymous." There is plenty of experience and guidance that has been handed down over our 80+ years of existence.

So, I have been studying our *A.A. Service Manual 2018-2020 edition*. The Conference Charter can be found on page S105. In Article 3 it describes the relationship between the service conference and A.A. as a whole. The delegate role is a key link in this as you can see by the charter's language.

Article 3 of the Conference Charter states: *"Conference Relation to A.A.:* The Conference will act for A.A. in the perpetuation and guidance of its world services, and it will also be the vehicle by which the A.A. movement can express its view upon all matters of vital A.A. policy and all hazardous

What Happened at the 69th General Service Conference?

Will work begin on a Fifth Edition of the Big Book? Is GSO going to establish a database of Correctional Facilities with the status of the meetings held there? Is the Grapevine going to remove its "Alcoholism at Large" section?

Our delegate, Ken D. will be representing Area 59 at the 69th General Service Conference in New York from May 19-25, 2019 and he will bring back answers to these questions and more at two Mini Assemblies/Delegate's Conference Reports.

The first will be held on Saturday, June 8th in Bloomsburg Pa at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 9 St. Luke's Way. Doors open at 8am, meeting at 10am. The second Delegate's Report will be held June 30th in Philadelphia at the University of the Sciences, McNeil Science and Technology Center, 4308 Woodland Ave. Doors open at 8am, meeting at 10am. For more information and flyers see the Area 59 website.

www.area59aa.org

deviations from A.A. Tradition.

Delegates should be free to vote as their conscience dictates; they should also be free to decide what questions should be taken to the group level, whether for information, discussion, or their own direct instruction.” (p. S105.)

So, in practical terms what does this mean? Our long-standing practice in Area 59 has been for the Area Committee to host a Pre-Conference Sharing Session where members can participate in a review of some of the Conference Agenda Items. By listening to the discussions and recommendations of Area 59, the delegate and alternate-delegate gain a solid sense of Eastern Pennsylvania’s group conscience.

As you can see by Article 3, the delegate must be open-minded so that at the actual Conference (May 19 – 26) he can use the conscience of his area and the information discussed by other delegates. In the final voting decision, the standard is “What’s best for A.A. – *as a whole?*” Thus, while it doesn’t happen often, occasionally the delegate casts a vote different from his area conscience. However, the delegate is responsible to return to his area and explain this during a report to members.

We have collected a survey from DCM’s and members to prepare the items that Area 59 discussed at our Pre-Conference Session. This gives members a voice in what they believe to be the most important items the delegate should hear. I hope that you were able to attend the Pre-Conference Sharing Session hosted by District 36 and held in the Harrisburg area on Saturday, May 4th.

If you are interested in what the Conference Agenda looks like, you can download it from our website. If you would like background information about a specific agenda item, contact our Alternate Delegate, Caroline N. at alt-delegate@area59aa.org

There are two other key events that your delegate and alternate-delegate attend to prepare for the Conference: The Northeast Regional A.A. Service Assembly (NERAASA); and the Northeast Regional Delegate’s meeting (NERD).

I attended NERAASA (held near Baltimore) over the February 22- 24 weekend. The panel presentations covered topics that are pertinent to the Conference; e.g. “Should A.A. produce and publish a 5th Edition of the Big Book?” There were informative discussions about diversity and inclusiveness; a report about the General Service Board activities by our Northeast Regional Trustee; and other topics. I attended the Delegate’s workshop and presented a summary of service highlights about Area 59.

Your delegate and alternate-delegate attended the Northeast Regional Delegates meeting in Somerset, New Jersey on March 8th and 9th. There we heard more current information and prepared for the Conference. We are grateful for all the service support in our Fellowship! At any level of service, we don’t have to go it alone. We have the spirit and strength of a Fellowship with a common, single purpose.

I hope to see you at upcoming Area 59 service events: *service is gratitude in action!*

Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous: The Third Arm of A.A.

*by David H., General Chair,
The Pennsylvania Bid for
ICYPAA*

In October of 1939, the first Central Committee was formed in Cleveland, Ohio. According to Box 459, "A group of seven was meeting once a month, among other things to coordinate efforts regarding hospitalizations and sponsorship". This committee soon became the Fellowship Intergroup and in 1943, the first Intergroup had established a service center.

Formed on August 11th, 1938, the Alcoholic Foundation, as it was then called, was formed to give the movement an "organizational framework". This foundation served as our fellowship's first Board of Trustees. In April of 1947, Bill W. wrote a paper to the Alcoholic Foundation titled "Our A.A. General Service Center - The Alcoholic Foundation of Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow". It outlined a history of the Foundation, and recommended implementation of a General Service Conference as well as changing the name of the Alcoholic Foundation to the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. The first General Service Conference was held at the Hotel Commodore in New York City from April 20th to the 22nd of 1951. This meeting transferred the full and permanent responsibility for our fellowship from the Board of Trustees to the group conscience of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. Thus, began the second arm of A.A.

According to <https://www.icypaa.org/>, "Young People's Groups in Alcoholics Anonymous

began appearing around 1945 in Los Angeles, Cleveland, and Philadelphia, and now can be found all across North America. In 1958, a meeting of young A.A.'s from across the U.S. and Canada started what is now the International Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (ICYPAA), and it has met on an annual basis ever since. At the 1960 A.A. Convention, Bill W. noted that the age of new members was much lower than when he and Dr. Bob founded A.A. 25 years earlier. In a letter to ICYPAA dated June 15th, 1969, Bill wrote '...in recent years I have found nothing for greater inspiration than the knowledge that A.A. of tomorrow will be safe, and certainly magnificent, in the keeping of you who are the younger generation of A.A. today'."

Now 61 years later, young people in Alcoholics Anonymous (YPAA) has become a well-established third arm of A.A. and has seen conferences form and grow in many states, regions, countries, and continents throughout the world. Many places also have standing YPAA committees that serve to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to young alcoholics in their area. While many young alcoholics find fellowship and inspiration at annual YPAA conferences, the real Twelfth Step work takes place during the rest of the year between conferences. This work is carried out by every YPAA committee that hosts a conference, bids for a conference, serves on an Advisory Council, or serves on a standing YPAA committee.

In Pennsylvania, there has been an explosion of interest in YPAA in recent years. Our annual Pennsylvania State Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (PENNSCYPAA) gathers about 800-1,000 young people each year. This year, PENNSCYPAA will be held in West

Chester from July 12th to the 14th. Each year, small groups of young people come together to form a Bid Committee in an effort to bring the conference to their hometown and to introduce others to their first YPAA conference. More information on this year's conference and how to form a Bid Committee can be found at <http://www.pennscypaa.org/>.

After hosting PENNSCYPAA in 2016, the Pittsburgh Host Committee went on to reform as the "Keystone" Bid for the Eastern Area Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (EACYPAA). After bidding for this conference for 3 years, the Keystone Bid was awarded the conference for 2020. This conference takes place in the Spring of each year and gathers about 1,500-2,000 young people from all over the Eastern region of the U.S. and Canada. More information regarding EACYPAA can be found at <https://www.eacypaa.org/>.

There is also a Pennsylvania Bid for ICYPAA! Formed as a Philadelphia Bid for ICYPAA after PENNSCYPAA was Hosted in Philadelphia in 2011, this committee has undergone a huge transformation over the past two years in an effort to unite young people throughout the entire state while continuing to bid for the conference. Last year it was determined that our committee should include members from all reaches of the state and this year we have adopted a new structure modeled after General Service in an effort to make this vision a reality. We now have Regional Subcommittees operating in many areas throughout the state to plan events, outreach ICYPAA, and coordinate service opportunities. We are continuing to reach out to small pockets of enthusiasm in some of the least represented parts of the state and to offer our experience. We hope that small groups that form

a subcommittee with us will find a platform to build upon so that they may someday be able to bid for PENNSCYPAA. Our structure also allows existing Host and Bid committees to share their experience and learn from each other in the same way that Groups learn from the experience of other Groups when their General Service Representatives attend District Meetings.

Over the past 7 years, the Pennsylvania Bid for ICYPAA has partnered with the Eastern Pennsylvania General Service Assembly (EPGSA) and the Southeast Pennsylvania Intergroup Association (SEPIA) to help with service events and to fill service commitments for Treatment Facilities, Corrections, and Cooperation with the Professional Community. Now as a statewide committee, we are beginning to work with Area 60 (Western PA) as well as numerous Intergroups and Central Offices throughout the state. Some additional service opportunities that we've undertaken have been bringing A.A. meetings into a recovery high school, helping to create events like YPAA Share A Day, and to create a podcast called the Young Sober Voices Podcast in which we record the messages of young people in A.A. and make it available to the public in an anonymity protected way. We continue to look for opportunities to reach the still suffering alcoholic.

2020 is shaping up to be an exciting year for young people in Pennsylvania with both PENNSCYPAA and EACYPAA being held in our state. The Pennsylvania Bid for ICYPAA will attend the 61st ICYPAA in Boston, Massachusetts this summer from August 22nd to the 25th in an attempt to be awarded the conference for 2020. This honor and privilege will bring 3,000-5,000 young people from all over the world to

Pennsylvania and we will continue to bid for the conference until this dream comes true! More information on ICYPAA can be found at

<https://www.icypaa.org/> and more information about our committee can be found at <http://pabid.org/>.



Spotlight on District 25

By: Candy S.

Philadelphia is known as the City of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection. It is its own county and the fifth largest city in the United States. It is where the first United States President lived and where the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were signed. We are known for soft pretzels, cheese steaks, scrapple and Tastykakes.

Philadelphia is one of five counties that comprise SEPIA, Southeast Pennsylvania Intergroup Association, along with Bucks, Montgomery, Delaware, and Chester counties. A.A. has been in Philadelphia since 1940 when a man named Jim B. came to town. He was a traveling salesman and had been a member of the New York group. He had been dry for two years.

The Germantown Section of Philadelphia played a significant role in American history; it was the birthplace of the American antislavery movement, the site of Revolutionary War battle, the temporary residence of George Washington and the location of the first bank of the United States.

District 25 is located in the Northwestern section of Philadelphia, Pa. and comprises parts of Andorra, Chestnut Hill, East Falls, Germantown, Manayunk, Mt. Airy, Oak Lane, Olney and Roxborough neighborhoods. District 25 is a very active district and our members attend and participate in many events. We have approximately 40 groups in our district and about half that number attends the district meeting.

Our District meeting is held the first Tuesday of the month from 7pm to 9pm. We meet at the Unitarian Church on Lincoln Drive where the Osceola A.A. Group meets. During the first year of a new panel the GSRs are guided through the entire *A.A. Service Manual*. The second year is spent doing a District Inventory and inviting members of the Area Committee to appear. This helps the GSRs become further acquainted with the people they will be voting for during the upcoming Convention/Assembly.

Come visit us the next time you are in Philadelphia. You can find an A.A. meeting every day of the week in District 25.

The "God" Word
Agnostic and Atheist Members in A.A.
By Sarah R. with thanks to Glenn S.

- One of the newest pamphlets, The "God" Word was adopted and adapted from the British version and became available October 26 of 2018
- It consists of an Introduction, 10 personal stories and a list of AA literature and resources relevant to atheist/agnostic members
- It has generated a great deal of interest. GSO sold out of their first available stock and the Area Literature Subcommittee gave away 500 at the EPGSA last November. A downloadable PDF is available through the aa.org website

Here is a quote from the introduction, written by Bill W. in 1965:

"We have atheists and agnostics. We have people from every race and culture and religion. In A.A. we are supposed to be bound together in the kinship of a common suffering. Consequently, the full individual liberty to practice any creed or principle or therapy whatever should be a first consideration for us all. Let us not, therefore, pressure anyone with our individual or even our collective views. Let us instead accord each other the respect and love that is due to every human being as he tries to make his way toward the light. Let us always try to be inclusive rather than exclusive; let us remember that each alcoholic among us is a member of A.A., as long as he or she declares."

History:

- There have been atheists and agnostics in A.A. since before the Big Book was published.
- Hank Parkhurst (The Unbeliever), and Jim Burwell (The Vicious Cycle) insisted Bill W. make changes to the Big Book. In Step 2, "A Power greater than ourselves" replaced "God". In Step 3 and 11, the single word "God" was qualified by the addition of "as we understand Him". "On our knees" was cut from Step 7.
- 1975- The first North American secular group was "AA for Atheists and Agnostics." This Group, "AAAA" or "Quad A," started in Chicago.
- 2017-approximately 400 secular A.A. meetings weekly in North America
- Atheists and agnostics felt the need for a pamphlet with stories telling just how they got and stayed sober in A.A.

How can my District's GSRs use this pamphlet?

- Sponsorship tool
- Increase our inclusivity -reach more alcoholics
- Spark discussion about A.A.'s history and "a Power greater than ourselves."

Questions to ponder:

- Do members of your District look down on atheist or agnostic members as less spiritually advanced, or do we give them a warm welcome and treat them as fellow sufferers? If Secular, do they look down on religious members?
- Does my District, or Home Group, give the impression that they are affiliated with Christianity?
- Do we act as if "our" brand of spirituality is the only correct way to get and stay sober, or do we accord each other respect and love?
- How can I use this pamphlet in my District to promote A.A. Unity? Do we remember that Love and Tolerance of others is our code?
- Can I save a newcomer's life by showing them that Alcoholics Anonymous has room for everyone?

Please read The "God" Word- it is not a pamphlet only for Atheists and Agnostics. It offers experience, strength and hope for all members of our Fellowship.

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

OUR BIG BOOK-80 YEARS, 71 LANGUAGES

2019 G.S.C. THEME

