

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

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From the Current Delegate: by Ken D, Delegate, Panel 69

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<https://area59aa.org/services-resources/>

Dear Fellow Members,

Taking time out to write to you has provided me a good opportunity to reflect on recent unforeseen events that have had significant impact on the normal interactions of our Fellowship. Last time I shared with you; we were preparing for the 2020 (70th Annual) General Service Conference. We were anticipating the celebration and gathering of our 2020 International Convention in Detroit. Since then, with the social gathering restrictions applied by public health officials to help slow the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have experienced a rapid and vast shift in the way most of our groups gather for meetings.

You may know by now that the 2020 International Convention has been cancelled. You can find more details at the web site: www.aa.org. Click on https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/international-convention-2020 And, you probably have received emails regarding your specific hotel and registration refunds by now.

As for the 70th Annual General Service Conference (G.S.C.), it has been rescheduled to the final weeks of April for virtual online Committee meetings and May 16th through 19th for the general sessions. Our area

What's Happening at GSO?

Although the General Service Office in New York has been physically closed since March 20, 2020 our trusted servants have been hard at work.

- **[The 70th General Service Conference: Saturday, May 16-Tuesday, May 19, 2020: A total of four days with up to of six hours of Conference sessions each day.](#)**
- **[A.A.W.S. has an updated A.A. Literature Catalog 2020 with new simplified pricing \(pricing statement\) and has literature available for sale: Please contact the Order Department at 212-870-3312 or email \[orders@aa.org\]\(mailto:orders@aa.org\) or visit <https://onlineliterature.aa.org>.](#)**
- **[Free: all 2020 Grapevine and La Viña issues \(+audio, our YouTube channel, and more\) at \[www.aagrapevine.org/we-are-here-to-help\]\(http://www.aagrapevine.org/we-are-here-to-help\)](#)**

officers and a recruited Past Delegate & Trustee adviser, J. Gary L., worked hard to plan and schedule modified online Area 59 Pre-Conference Sharing Sessions for April 5th and 19th. A private discussion-posting board was designed to receive input from any A.A. Member or group. DCMs and Past Delegates also attended the first session to present their perspectives on selected agenda items. On April 19th, the Pre-Conference Sharing Session was open to any interested Member. An email blast was sent to all contacts in our group database to share the information and link to the discussion boards. I thank all who have helped me be prepared with the selected agenda items for this years' GSC.

The Mini-Assemblies and Delegate Conference Reports have been cancelled as personal gatherings and will be re-scheduled as virtual online events. We will share details and an invitation to all Members as soon as planning is completed. We will also post details on our web site Service Calendar. The June quarterly Area 59 Committee meeting has also been changed to a virtual online event. Again, more details will be sent out as soon as we have them ready.

While, I am not attempting to make any projections about what the pandemic situation will be in the Fall, after consult with area officers, I have recruited an advisory team to plan alternatives for our 2020 Area 59 Election Assembly. The team leader is Fred S., a technology professional, past DCM, past SEPIA Chairman, and leader of the SEPIA web site modernization team. He is joined by several servants who have solid General Service and Third Legacy voting experience: past delegate and Convention Committee member, Hugh H. (continued on next page)

- ***A new service piece has been added for online groups or meetings wondering how to “pass the virtual basket” in order to practice the Seventh Tradition, [FAQ on Practicing the Seventh Tradition at Virtual Meetings](#)***
- ***[The 2020 International Convention is Cancelled](#). The Chair of our General Service Board, Michele Grinberg, shared that "While the decision to cancel our International Convention is a difficult one, it is important to remember that Alcoholics Anonymous is not a place or an event; it exists in the hearts, minds and help freely offered. A.A. groups and members across the globe continue to focus on our primary purpose of carrying a message of hope and recovery; and with our shared code of love and tolerance, may we continue for so long as we are needed."***

Hugh also has professional experience in technology; Claire B., Public Information Director for SEPIA and Current ADCM (44); Ira M., past DCM (29) who has an excellent understanding of internet applications; and, Greg G., Area 59 Web Servant, Convention Committee consultant and member of the National AA Technology Workshop. Greg also has professional experience with Internet applications and technology. None of these members are eligible to stand for area office in the coming election, so there are no conflicts of interest. They have been observing our use of voting processes and interaction with Pre-Conference Sharing Sessions to learn what may be good alternatives should Area 59 have to use an online approach to our election. Of course, any recommendations by this advisory team will be brought to the entire Area 59 Committee for approval. We will make regular reports to the Area Committee, as well.

Our Area Chairperson, Steve S. put all Area Forums planning on hold for now. He will update us when we are able to return to planning those events. In the meantime, your area officers are looking at a few alternatives for service-oriented events we can share with all members in Area 59.

On a national front, I have attended weekly Northeast Regional Delegate videoconferences. Our Northeast Regional Trustee, Francis G., attends these and keeps the delegates and alternate delegates informed of all the proceedings of the General Service Board and the General Service Office staff. The G.S.O. staff is working from home to keep services and planning up and running. You can still purchase literature – go online as you need (www.aa.org). I will continue to share important information through our communication channels and with the Area Committee as I get it. Please feel free to reach out to any area officer or servant as you have questions.

This virtual online meeting age came upon us in a whirlwind. The way we have adapted to meet these challenges and still carry the message has been impressive. We really are a creative bunch! Nonetheless, the new platforms like Zoom were not designed with our Traditions in mind – or with personal privacy in mind for that matter. I urge Members and groups to take a critical look at the best practices for using these online platforms so you can operate within our Traditions and help protect privacy as much as possible. You can go to www.area59aa.org and click on Members Services for suggestions on how to monitor and change Zoom settings. It is a duty of your delegate to educate Members and groups about the importance of our Traditions - especially 11 & 12 – and to address significant anonymity breaks. These Internet platforms were not designed with anonymity in mind, so please be prudent in educating yourselves and other Members in their use. Please reach out to your area officers if you have issues or questions.

Finally, regarding our 7th Tradition, this pandemic and the ensuing social restrictions have had an historic impact on economic activity. Many groups are shifting to the use of digital – Internet based – money transfers. I encourage you to continue to support your Group, district, inter-group, area 59 and G.S.O. through online contributions. Area 59 contributions can be made online at www.area59aa.org. GSO contributions can be made online at www.aa.org. Most intergroups can receive online contributions. Thank you for keeping this in mind.

I close with my deepest gratitude to you all for the wonderful spirit of Unity that I see across our Fellowship in Eastern Pennsylvania and beyond. I pray that we continue to carry the message of love and service, not only to the tech-savvy; but, let us remember the member who does not, or

cannot, use a smart phone, tablet or pc. Think about making that phone call to the shut in. Many intergroup and districts have set up ways to reach these members or potential members. After all, it was through this kind of grace that we received our recovery. And, it is with this same kind of grace that we are called to share it to the next suffering alcoholic. My personal prayers and intentions are for your continued recovery, safety, and health. May the God of your understanding continue to keep you as we "trudge the Road of Happy Destiny"!

In Fellowship and Service,

Ken D., Delegate

Women in A.A.

By: Sarah R.

Originally called *A.A. for the Woman* this pamphlet was revised and reissued in 2018 as *Women in A.A.*. The shift from unintentional paternalism to empowerment, in the title alone, indicates that women truly have full citizenship in Alcoholics Anonymous, complete with all of its rights and responsibilities. The 12 stories contained therein remind all of us in the fellowship that women have suffered horribly from the insidious disease of alcoholism.

In "I used to be ashamed of my story" a woman explains "...alcohol became my only means to escape the excruciating self-loathing, shame, disgust and depression that I felt when I sobered up. This is the insanity of the disease: I drank to stop hating myself, but I hated myself the more I drank. I couldn't stop the endless cycle."

Part of "You are not alone" which introduces this pamphlet says " It doesn't matter whether you are 16 or 60, rich or poor, college graduate or high school dropout, business executive or stay-at-home mom, a patient in a treatment facility, a prison inmate, or living on the street. Help is available, but you must make the decision to ask for it."

As you may have guessed, the story I quoted earlier ends like this: "Regret, fear, self-loathing and mental anguish no longer rule my life. The obsession to drink has been lifted. I know who I am at my core, what I stand for and what to value, and I love myself. My relationship with my Higher Power is unbreakable and I wouldn't change a thing about my past. I owe my life to the program of A.A."

This pamphlet is available online in English, Spanish and French:

https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-5_WomeninAA.pdf

https://www.aa.org/assets/es_ES/sp-5_WomeninAA.pdf

https://www.aa.org/assets/fr_FR/fp-5_WomeninAA.pdf



Spotlight on District 41

By Ken P

Hi, I'm Ken P. and I'm an alcoholic. I'm from District 41 in the Poconos; Stroudsburg, PA. District 41 used to be twice as large, geographically, as it is now. District 41 was split into two districts (41 and 61) in the early (1990's). The two new districts still work very closely together through their intergroup: sharing responsibilities for several regional activities and commitments like the Monroe County Correctional facility, hospital, workshops, answering service, and Grapevine picnic. We hold our very well attended district meetings on the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 pm in the Zion United Church of Christ on 8th Street.

District 41 has 21 groups with 19 active GSRs that regularly attend district meetings and events. We are in the middle of the indoor waterpark capital of the world with Great Wolf Lodge, Kalahari, and Aquatopia (Camelback) all close to us, with the Delaware water gap and the Pocono mountains in residence as well. There is never a lack of activity indoor or outdoor. In addition, we are only 90 minutes from Philly or NYC if you need the bright lights of the big city. It is a wonderful location regardless of what you are looking for.

Annual District 41 events include: **Spring and Fall Workshops** in, sure enough, the Spring and Fall. We work closely with District 61 on our workshops and our featured event, the **Grapevine Picnic**. The picnic is held at High Acres park at 110 High Acres Drive (directly off Route 447 north) in Canadensis. This year, 2020, the picnic will be held on July 18, rain or shine. For the past three years, we have been holding a Fall dinner-dance that is very well attended and is very enjoyable. We also facilitate trips to multiple minor league hockey and baseball games in the Lehigh Valley. We are a happy, hard working group of folks that are trying to stay sober and carry the message to the still sick and suffering alcoholic. If you are in the Stroudsburg area, reach out or come to one of our many meetings. We would love to see you!

The Voice of Alcoholics Anonymous

By: Steve S. Chairperson, Panel 69

Hi Everyone! I appreciate the opportunity to write about the General Service Conference, which represents our voice for A.A. as a whole.

Bill W. wrote:

"The most vital, yet least understood, group of services that A.A. has are those that enable us to function as a whole, namely: the General Service Office, A.A. World Services, Inc., The A.A. Grapevine, Inc., and our board of trustees, known legally as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our worldwide unity and much of our growth since early times are directly traceable to this cluster of life-giving activities." ([AA Service Manual](#), page S3)

A.A. has [Twelve Concepts of World Service](#) that help our Fellowship come to an informed group conscience on matters that affect A.A. as a whole. Under Concept I, our General Service Office serves the groups. That sounds great, but how do the people in our G.S.O. know what we want them to do?

Under Concept II the groups delegate authority to someone to represent us at the General Service Conference once a year. This is a week-long meeting where decisions are made that affect A.A. as a whole. It consists of 93 Delegates from the U.S. and Canada, 7 nonalcoholic Trustees, 14 alcoholic Trustees, non-Trustee Directors and G.S.O. employees. All of the members of the Conference are alcoholics except for the 7 nonalcoholic Trustees.

During that week they discuss, and vote on, approximately 70 to 90 Agenda Items. An Agenda Item is an idea that can come from any A.A. member, Group, District or Area. An example of an Agenda Item that started in Area 59 is the video [A New Freedom](#). This is a video about A.A. members who are imprisoned. It can be viewed on the [AAWS YouTube Channel](#). This year District 55 (Area 59) submitted an idea that became an Agenda Item. If the Conference votes in favor of the item with substantial unanimity (2/3 vote), that Agenda Item will become a Conference Advisory Action.

After the Conference, the board of trustees (Concepts VI and VIII), take the Conference Advisory Actions and see to it that they are implemented by our G.S.O. For example, if the Conference votes with substantial unanimity for a 5th edition Big Book, that will become a Conference Advisory Action. The trustees will then work with our G.S.O. to publish the new book.

Area 59, the Districts and the G.S.R. positions were created for one purpose; to send a Delegate to the Conference to discuss and vote on issues that affect A.A. as a whole.

There are many alcoholics who desperately want to stop drinking, but don't know there is a solution. The way that we, as A.A. members, can help to reach them is through the General Service Conference. The Conference may seem far removed from our meetings, but it needs an informed conscience of the groups to be of maximum service. Although we are but a small part of a great whole, everyone's participation is important. We participate through our G.S.R.s, District and Area.

FYI... Two handy reference “Mini Catalogs” are designed to help folks discover what is new and revised in our A.A. literature and other items:

- 1) **[Mini Catalog of New and Forthcoming Items of A.A. Literature from A.A.W.S., Inc.](#)**
- 2) **[Mini Catalog of AA Grapevine new and backlist books and other items.](#)**

Hot of the press...

[A.A. Literature Catalog — This catalog lists all Conference-approved literature and other A.A. Material. ... 2020.](#)

“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

A Clear Vision for You 2020 GSC Theme

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